

Application Guide

for ETH students and doctoral students



ANALYSIS
EXPLORATION
FOCUSING
APPLICATION

*Believing that the dots
will connect down the road
will give you the confidence
to follow your heart.*

STEVE JOBS

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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 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 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 → 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.”

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

“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!”

“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

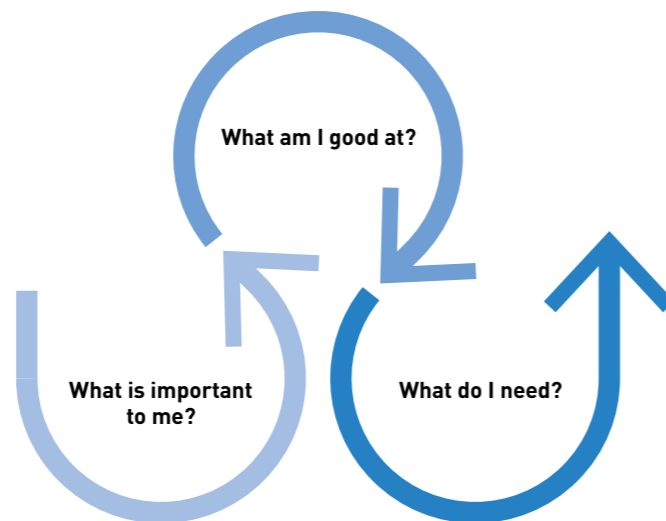
Careful assessment of where you stand is the first step in the application process. It is your launch pad for exploring career options, for focusing on specific sectors and companies, and for the application itself. A rigorous self-analysis will help you focus on organisations and career opportunities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

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.

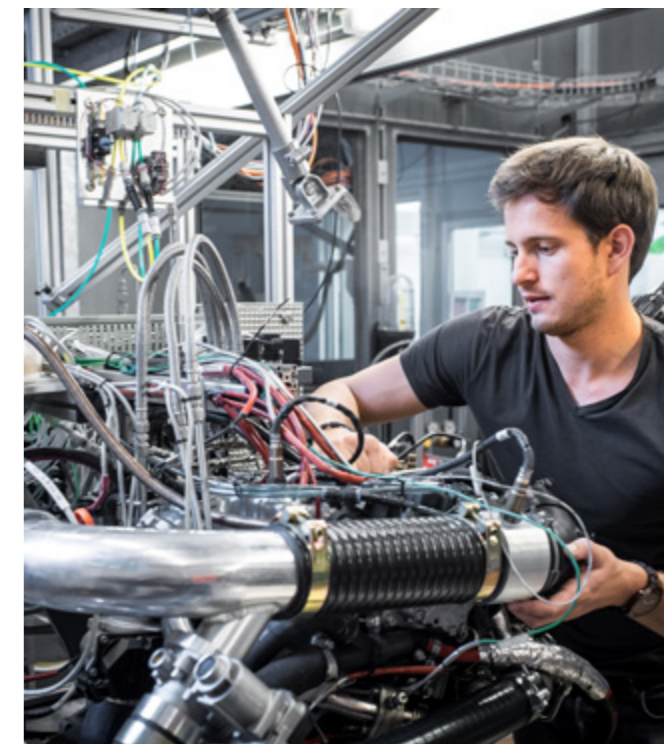


What is important to me?

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.

Do you like to...		😊	☹️
Focus on people	Teach people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Listen to friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Help people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Lead a group or club activity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Mediate in a conflict between two people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Run for office	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Entertain children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Total, focus on people		
Focus on data	Take up research on a given topic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Take part in a club as its treasurer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Conduct scientific experiments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Work with numbers and statistics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Calculate a car's fuel consumption	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Program software	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Total, focus on data		

Source: <https://collegecareerlife.net/career-interests>

Do you like to...		😊	☹️
Focus on things	Bake a cake	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Repair a car or a machine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Make crafts or sew	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Build things made of wood, metal, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Operate devices or machines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Garden or do landscaping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Total, focus on things		
	Focus on ideas	Decorate a room	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write poems or lyrics		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Publish an article in a blog or magazine		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Solve a problem		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perform in a play		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Play an instrument		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Invent a new product		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Total, focus on ideas			

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.

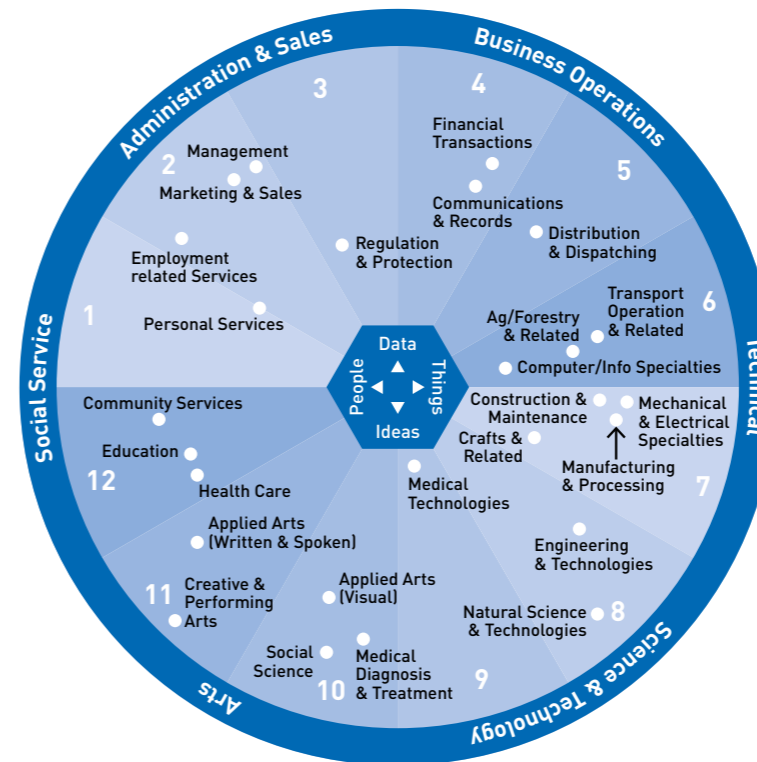
When reflecting on these four fundamental preferences, do you have any further interests that are not mentioned above? List them in the box below.

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:
www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/interest_inventory.pdf

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.*

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

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”.

Values	1	2	3	4
Advancement Be able to get ahead rapidly, gaining opportunities for growth and seniority from work well-done.	■	■	■	■
Adventure / risk-taking Have duties which involve frequent physical, financial or social risk-taking.	■	■	■	■
Aesthetics Be involved in studying or appreciating the beauty of things, ideas, etc.	■	■	■	■
Altruism Do something to contribute to the betterment of the world or a greater good.	■	■	■	■
Balance Have a job that allows room and time for other passions, leisure, family, etc.	■	■	■	■
Challenge Work with complex questions and on demanding tasks, troubleshooting and problem-solving.	■	■	■	■
Change and variety Have a wide range of work responsibilities, frequently changing in content, setting, people and/or activities.	■	■	■	■

Values	1	2	3	4
Competition Engage in activities that measure my abilities against others.	■	■	■	■
Creativity / innovation Be able to contribute and work with my creative ideas.	■	■	■	■
Competence Tasks that allow me to demonstrate a high degree of expertise and mastery of job skills and knowledge.	■	■	■	■
Fast pace / time pressure Work in circumstances where work is done rapidly.	■	■	■	■
Flexibility Work according to my own time schedule.	■	■	■	■
Friendships A good working atmosphere and an environment in which I can build good, personal relationships with people.	■	■	■	■
Fun Have opportunities to be playful and humorous at work.	■	■	■	■
Harmony / tranquillity Avoid pressures and stress in job role and work setting, and seek harmonious relationships.	■	■	■	■

Values	1	2	3	4
Help others Be involved in helping or being of service to people, either individually or in groups.	■	■	■	■
Income / financial reward Earn a larger than average amount of income.	■	■	■	■
Independence / autonomy Be in a position with little direction or instructions from others; few regulations and room to make my own decisions.	■	■	■	■
Influence Be in a position to influence attitudes or opinions of other people.	■	■	■	■
Make decisions / power Make decisions regarding courses of action, strategies or the work activities of others.	■	■	■	■
Moral / spiritual fulfilment Feel that my work is consistent with my ideals or moral code.	■	■	■	■
Personal growth Have work which enables me to grow as a person.	■	■	■	■
Recognition Get positive feedback and public credit for work well done.	■	■	■	■

Values	1	2	3	4
Security Have a stable work environment and reasonable financial reward.	■	■	■	■
Stability Have a work routine and job duties that are largely predictable and not likely to change over a long period of time.	■	■	■	■
Status / prestige Gain the respect of friends, family and of the community by the nature and/or level of responsibility of my work.	■	■	■	■
Teamwork Have close working relations with my colleagues; work as team towards common goals.	■	■	■	■
Work alone Do projects largely by myself, with little contact with others.	■	■	■	■

Source: University of Denver
<https://career.du.edu/resources/life-values-inventory/>

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 to knowing yourself is to clarify where your strengths lie. We all tend to take our character strengths, our acquired technical skills as well as our transferable competencies 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 will need to be able to talk about your character and technical strengths, and give examples of your transferable competencies (e.g., problem solving, communication, teamwork, customer orientation, ...). Additionally, interviewers will be keen to gauge your selfreflection by asking you to name your areas for development (or weaknesses).

In the next few pages, we offer you some tools and thoughts to help you identify what you are good at in terms of:

- Your character strengths
- Your technical or subject specific competencies
- Your transferable competencies



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.

Character strengths	Me				Friend				Family			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Achiever												
Adaptive												
Affable												
Ambitious												
Assertive												
Astute												
Athletic												
Authentic												
Brave												
Cheerful												
Communicative												
Compassionate												
Competitive												
Conciliatory												
Considerate												
Consistent												
Cooperative												
Curious												
Delicate												
Diplomatic												
Dynamic												

Character strengths	Me				Friend				Family			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Emotional												
Empathetic												
Enterprising												
Enthusiastic												
Entrepreneurial												
Fast												
Fastidious												
Fault-finding												
Fiery												
Flexible												
Focused												
Forgiving												
Friendly												
Generous												
Go-getter												
Good listener												
Hardworking												
Helpful												
Honest												
Humorous												
Idealistic												

Character strengths	Me				Friend				Family			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
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	Me				Friend				Family			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
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. 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:

Transferable skills

Confirmed strengths	Hidden strengths	Blind spots
<i>(My assessment agrees with that of others)</i>	<i>(Others' assessment was higher than mine)</i>	<i>(My assessment was higher than others')</i>

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.



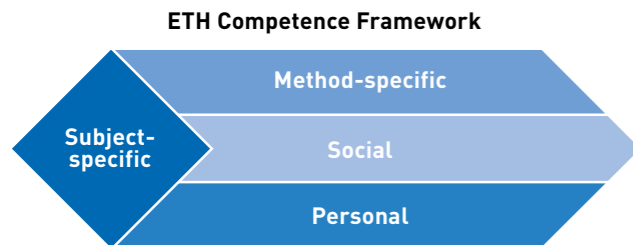
*You cannot discover
new oceans unless
you have the courage
to lose sight of the shore.*

ANDRÉ GIDE

My technical & transferable competencies

ETH recognizes the importance of developing not only students' technical skills but also their method-specific, social, and personal competencies (transferable competencies) in order to prepare students for future jobs and societal roles.

The [ETH competence framework](#) for students describes the competencies that ETH aims to foster as you attend the university's educational offering and extra-curricular activities.



Source: <https://ethz.ch/students/en/studies/eth-competencies-for-students.html>

Technical or subject specific competencies

These competencies concern knowledge of theories, concepts, and techniques as well as its application to specific fields. These competencies, that lie at the core of ETH's education, are specified in detail by the degree programmes.

Method-specific competencies

These competencies concern knowledge and application of methods to make sense of, and operate in, any context. Examples include: decision making, problem solving, project management.

Social competencies

Social competencies concern competencies applied in the interaction with others. Examples include: communication, teamwork, customer orientation, self-presentation.

Personal competencies

Personal competencies concern self-management in the context of your own work. Examples include: adaptability & flexibility, self-awareness, self-management, creative thinking.



Identifying my technical or subject specific competencies

Technical or subject specific skills are reflected in specialized 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 outdated 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.

Technical skills acquired at ETH include, for example, your knowledge in mathematics 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 technical or subject specific skills helps you to not only recognise the value that you can bring to a future employer, but also to support you in analysing job advertisements and writing your CV (see the chapter [Focusing](#) → [Job advertisement](#)).

My technical skills acquired at ETH or other schools

University / school	My strongest subject	Subjects that I am / was weaker in
e.g. ETH	e.g. nano systems	e.g. chemical analysis

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

Place of internship, jobs, etc.	Technical knowledge that I successfully applied and expanded	Technical knowledge that I found harder to apply
e.g. internship at Appway	e.g. using PowerPoint for company presentations	e.g. using C++



My transferable competencies

Recruiters seeking ideal candidates are not only looking for technical skills, specialised knowledge and research expertise. They are also actively searching for a broader skill set that applicants can bring to the organisation: the so called “transferable skills” or social, personal and method specific competencies. Examples include the ability to work in a team, leadership and communication skills, and the like.

These competencies are often called “transferable”, because if you are able to use a competence (e.g. teamwork) in one situation (e.g. in a student project), you should be able to use that competence in another situation (e.g. working in a project team at company xyz) – even if the two situations appear to be unrelated.

Although you may not realise it yet, you have acquired many transferable competencies in the course of your life at home, at work, during hobbies, during your studies or perhaps an internship, a part-time job or other extracurricular activities (e.g. active member of a student association). You do not need to have actual professional experience to acquire transferable competencies.

Listed in the table below are some key transferable skills that are part of the ETH competency framework (see page 34) and that hiring companies often seek.

Take a minute to read through the listed competencies and refer to their definitions by visiting the ETH Competency Framework website. Then rank yourself for each competency on a scale from 1 (I hardly ever exhibit this competency) to 4 (I often exhibit this competency).

Be as honest with yourself as you can – the goal is not to attain a 4 for every ability, but to have an objective reflection of your transferable competencies.

Then give the list to a friend or family member and ask them to evaluate you for each skill.

Transferable skills	Me				Friend				Family			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Method-specific Competencies												
Analytical Competencies												
Decision-making												
Media and Digital Technologies												
Problem solving												
Project Management												
Social Competencies												
Communication												
Cooperation and Teamwork												
Customer Orientation												
Leadership and Responsibility												
Self-presentation and Social Influence												
Sensitivity to Diversity												
Negotiation												

Transferable skills	Me				Friend				Family			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Personal Competencies												
Adaptability and Flexibility												
Creative Thinking												
Critical Thinking												
Integrity and Work Ethics												
Self-awareness and Self-reflection												
Self-direction and Self-management												

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:

Transferable skills		
Confirmed strengths	Hidden strengths	Blind spots
<i>(My assessment agrees with that of others)</i>	<i>(Others' assessment was higher than mine)</i>	<i>(My assessment was higher than others')</i>

For definition and more details on each competence see:
<https://ethz.ch/students/en/studies/eth-competencies-for-students.html>



Gathering evidence of my competencies

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.

Competency/Skill	Example of how I put it to use
Coping with pressure and change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situation: 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. • Task: Now I had to use an unfamiliar computer program, and my supervisor expected me to know what to do. • Activity: I was not going to let this unexpected change throw me off, so I decided to see to 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. • Results: 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.

Competency/ Skill	Example of how I put it to use
	Situation
	Task
	Activity
	Results
	Situation
	Task
	Activity
	Results

Competency/ Skill	Example of how I put it to use
	Situation
	Task
	Activity
	Results
	Situation
	Task
	Activity
	Results



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 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		
Would you be willing to move for your preferred job?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Would you be willing to travel as part of your job?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
What percentage of the time would you be willing to travel?		
<input type="checkbox"/> 10–20%	<input type="checkbox"/> 20–30%	<input type="checkbox"/> 30–40%
<input type="checkbox"/> 40–50%	<input type="checkbox"/> > 50%	
Where would you be willing to move or travel to?		
Switzerland	Europe	Rest of the world
<input type="checkbox"/> Zurich area	<input type="checkbox"/> German speaking parts of Europe/ DACH	<input type="checkbox"/> USA
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Switzerland	<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Europe	<input type="checkbox"/> Canada
<input type="checkbox"/> Central Switzerland	<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Europe	<input type="checkbox"/> South America
<input type="checkbox"/> North-western Switzerland	<input type="checkbox"/> South-eastern Europe	<input type="checkbox"/> Asia
<input type="checkbox"/> Mittelland	<input type="checkbox"/> Western Europe	<input type="checkbox"/> Middle East
<input type="checkbox"/> French-speaking Switzerland	<input type="checkbox"/> Southern Europe	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ticino		
Would you like to work full-time or part-time? (Please note that finding a part-time job is not easy.)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Full-time	<input type="checkbox"/> Part-time	

My mobility and availability
Would you be willing to work not only during the day, but also at other times (such as evenings)?
<input type="checkbox"/> Daytime
<input type="checkbox"/> Evenings
<input type="checkbox"/> Nights
<input type="checkbox"/> Weekends
<input type="checkbox"/> Irregular working hours
Reflections:
<div style="background-color: #e6f2ff; height: 150px;"></div>

Compromises

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

Source: *Your Complete Job Search Guide, Emploi Québec*; <https://www.quebec.ca/en/employment/learn-trade-occupation/choosing-career/know-yourself-to-make-an-informed-career-choice>

Summary

The building blocks for exploring

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



2 — EXPLORATION

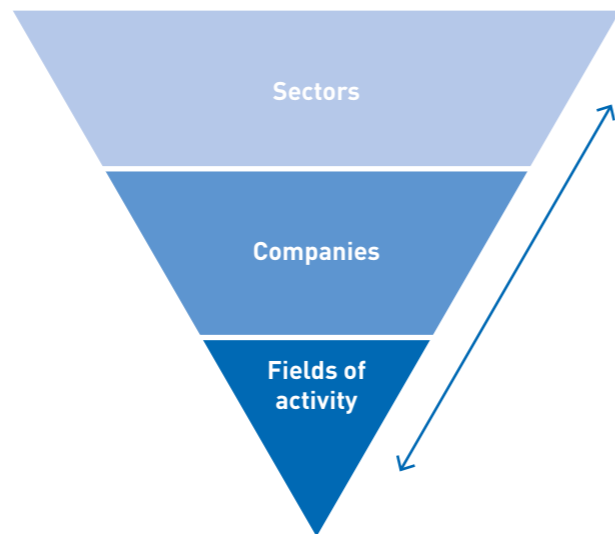
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My job market

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 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.

Public institutions and non-profit companies (examples)	1 st priority	2 nd priority	3 rd priority
Agricultural advisory service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Associations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development cooperation/NGOs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Government and public administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Power companies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research institutes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Secondary schools, technical colleges and universities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Private-sector industries (examples)	1 st priority	2 nd priority	3 rd priority
Aerospace	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Automotive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Banking, finance, insurance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Biomechanics, biotechnology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Biomedical industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chemical and process engineering	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Computer and information sciences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Construction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consulting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consumer goods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drive and control technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electronics and consumer electronics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Engineering, planning and surveying	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Extractive industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fertilizer, feed, and crop protection industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Private-sector industries (examples)	1 st priority	2 nd priority	3 rd priority
Food industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Healthcare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Machine engineering	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Media, journalism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medical technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Metalworking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Packaging industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pharmaceuticals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plant engineering	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Power generation, transmission and distribution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Production and automation engineering	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Semiconductor, micro and nanotechnology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sports, fitness, wellness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Telecommunications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Textiles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Watch-making	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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?	1	2	3	4
Size (large corporation, SME, startups, ETH spinoff*)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
National or multinational operation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business offering (products, services)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stability (financial situation, competition)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organizational structure (flat, hierarchical)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corporate culture (dynamic, traditional, conservative)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People development (entry-level positions, training programs, career prospects)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Location	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work/family life balance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Job security	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pay package (salary, fringe benefits)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flexible working hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other criteria:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other criteria:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other criteria:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

→ 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 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 (most of them are only published in German):
 - Careers
 - Berufe
 - Berufsbilder
 - Berufsmöglichkeiten
 - Berufswelt
 - Berufsfelder
 - berufliche Perspektive

- 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 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)	1 st priority	2 nd priority	3 rd priority
Accounting and controlling	■	■	■
Administration	■	■	■
Compliance, legal, corporate affairs	■	■	■
Consulting, planning and strategy	■	■	■
Customer service	■	■	■
Engineering	■	■	■
Human resources, training	■	■	■
Information technology and software	■	■	■
Infrastructure and real estate	■	■	■
Logistics and transport	■	■	■
Management	■	■	■
Manufacturing and commissioning	■	■	■
Marketing and communication	■	■	■
Media and design	■	■	■
Process management	■	■	■
Project management	■	■	■

Fields of activity (examples)	1 st priority	2 nd priority	3 rd priority
Purchasing and procurement	■	■	■
Quality assurance	■	■	■
Research and development	■	■	■
Sales, distribution and account management	■	■	■
Other fields of activity:	■	■	■
Other fields of activity:	■	■	■
Other fields of activity:	■	■	■

NB:

This list provides a broad but not exhaustive overview of potential fields of activity.

Job profiles

Real-world examples

In this next section 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.

ABB	Novartis
Axpo	Oepfelbaum
BCG	Roche
Bundesverwaltung	Rolex
Carbogen Amcis	RUAG
CKW	Siemens
CSL Behring	Swiss Re
ELCA	Tiefbauamt der Stadt Zürich
Ergon Informatik	UBS
Helbling	Zühlke
Hitachi Energy	
Leica/Hexagon	

Elena Quiriconi, 24

MSc ETH in Electrical Engineering and Information Technology

Discovery Trainee in **Electrification Service ABB****How did you find your job?**

At the Polymesse I talked with the representatives at the ABB booth about job entry opportunities, which led me to apply for the ABB Trainee Program.

What influenced your decision to join ABB?

ABB is a global and dynamic company fostering the personal development of its employees. The diverse business areas and positive work environment that aligned with my expectations were additional reasons for choosing a position at ABB. The trainee program provides an opportunity to explore various roles, allowing me to experiment different possibilities for my career and determine the path I wish to pursue.

What does a typical working day at ABB look like?

Depending on the project phase, my workday takes on various forms. In my current trainee program assignment, which focuses on process optimization within the project management team, I regularly engage with project managers to discuss their challenges. I establish connections with other stakeholders, strategize potential improvement pro-

posals, and review them with my supervisor. In addition to my assignment tasks, I participate in Trainee events, which keeps me in contact with the other trainees. This allows me to get more familiar with the ABB culture.

What in particular do you like about your job at ABB?

ABB is characterized by an inclusive atmosphere where it's easy to approach individuals regardless of their position. Open communication facilitates quick integration and provides opportunities to expand one's personal network. The trainee program is very versatile and even includes a six-month long assignment abroad.

What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?

I recommend carefully considering which aspects of a position are important to you – not only in terms of tasks, but also regarding working and team conditions. I suggest applying to various positions, even if your profile doesn't precisely match the job description.



—
**Be the author of a
visionary story.**

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careers.abb

ABB

Linda Schinz, 26

MSc ETH in Environmental Sciences

Trainee Energy Science at **Axpo****How did you find your job?**

After completing my Master's in Environmental Sciences, I specifically looked for companies offering trainee programmes for university graduates. On the Axpo website, I examined the various profiles of the trainee program. The 'Energy Science' profile particularly caught my attention.

What influenced your decision to join Axpo?

The energy sector is crucial for the transition to a sustainable, low-carbon future, and I would like to contribute to shaping that future. The Axpo trainee programme provides an excellent opportunity to start my professional career. It offers the chance to gain experience in three different teams over 18 months and to contribute one's ideas.

What does a typical working day at Axpo look like?

My daily routine is quite diverse due to the rotations in the traineeship. In my first rotation, I had the opportunity to be part of various projects in the hydropower and biomass sector. This involved tasks such as economically optimizing the maintenance planning of hydropower plants. Currently, in my second rotation within the energy trading de-

partment, I am involved in preparing the certification of battery storage systems for the foreign ancillary services markets.

What in particular do you like about your job at Axpo?

I appreciate the opportunity to gain insights into various areas of the energy sector, engaging with many fascinating people and topics. Additionally, I value the exchange within the trainee community immensely. We have several shared events such as trainee lunches or visits to power plants.

What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?

Gain an overview of career fields that interest you, and connect with individuals working in those industries. This allows you to better understand company cultures and industry-specific requirements. And do not hesitate to apply for positions where you may not meet all requirements. Many skills can be learned on the job.

Join us and shape the energy future!

As the largest Swiss producer of renewable energies and an international leader in energy trading and the marketing of solar and wind power, we offer students, doctoral candidates and university graduates the best conditions for a challenging and varied start to their careers.



The Power of You



Patricia Künzle, 28

MSc ETH Molecular Health Sciences
Associate at **BCG Zurich** (Switzerland)

How did you find your job?

During my Master studies I signed up for several consulting workshops and attended multiple presentations. There, I got the chance to learn about consulting at BCG, meet recruiters and future colleagues, and got to know what real case-work means on a day-to-day basis. I decided to apply for an internship to know if a position in management consulting made sense for me. It turns out it did and that is how I came back 9 months later as a full-time Associate!

What influenced your decision to join BCG?

The exciting and always stimulating work that I would be doing, surrounded by a talented group of people coming from diverse backgrounds.

What does a typical working day at BGC look like?

I start my day with coffee and chatting with co-workers, followed by e-mail checks and team meetings to set daily priorities. We plan client workshops and meetings. I also arrange catch-ups and lunches with friends and mentors. Occasionally, we brainstorm with partners over calls. The day often includes sports or team dinners. Each day is unique at BCG, which I enjoy the most!

What in particular do you like about your job at BCG?

Firstly, I value the diverse project topics at BCG. Secondly, the complexity of multifaceted problems offers a steep learning curve. Thirdly, working with an international team is inspiring. Additionally, BCG's initiatives like Women@BCG, Pride@BCG, and sports events make it a unique and inclusive workplace.

What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?

Apply for recruiting events or similar workshops and talk to as many people as you can who are working in consulting or in other industries and ask the questions that really matter to you: what are you looking for in your next position and with your next employer? If you are unsure whether consulting would be a good fit for you, I highly encourage you to just try it out, with an internship: you will not know until you try it!

Beyond curious.

Discover Juliette's journey from a Master's student to an Associate at Boston Consulting Group (BCG).

Engaged in workshops and fueled by a transformative internship, she delves into the dynamic world of consulting.

Juliette's story offers insights into her daily challenges, the diversity of her team, and valuable advice for aspiring professionals.



Do you want to learn more?
We hire passionate, open-minded, and accomplished students with a background in STEM, natural sciences, and humanities. Participate in one of our recruiting events to get to know us or apply directly at: <https://careers.bcg.com/locations/switzerland>

Lea Beusch, 31

Dr sc. ETH Zurich

Scientific Research Assistant at **MeteoSwiss****How did you find your job?**

While pursuing my postdoc at MeteoSwiss I discovered a job advertisement for my current permanent position on our internal job portal and applied for it.

Why did you choose to work at MeteoSwiss?

MeteoSwiss is a very attractive employer for me which is why I have decided to work here. I am able to conduct applied research with very exciting data which directly benefits the population. I am also lucky to benefit from an appealing balance between working from home and in the office.

How does your day-to-day work at MeteoSwiss look like?

The goal of my work is to automatically identify extreme weather events in weather forecasts. To achieve this, I develop products which my team and I put into action, keep running and continuously optimise. In order to master this task, I carry out a broad spectrum of activities ranging from conceptual scientific work to programming, creating training courses and further administrative tasks. It is essential

to the success of my work to facilitate a close coordination and collaboration with colleagues working in different fields and language regions.

What do you particularly like about your job at MeteoSwiss?

I particularly appreciate how meaningful and interesting my work is and that my varied tasks enable me to learn many new things every day.

What do you recommend to students to kickstart their career?

Look for job opportunities in companies and areas where you feel comfortable and whose values you can identify yourself with. Do not let negative experiences get you down but treat them as a learning opportunity to understand what things are important to you in future jobs.

Note that you have to master two national languages if you want to work for the Federal Administration.



I assess the flood situation in all regions. I'm working for Switzerland.

Coralie

Earth Sciences

Specialist for hydrological predictions

stelle.admin.ch


Mathis Baumann, 27

MSc ETH in Chemistry and Bioengineering
Project Chemist PR&D, **CARBOGEN AMCIS AG**

How did you find your job?

On a job portal.

What influenced your decision to join CARBOGEN AMCIS?

Eventually, it was the better working conditions (salary, working hours, etc.) that tipped the scales. But the fact that I had a good feeling after the interview definitely helped too.

What does a typical working day at CARBOGEN AMCIS look like?

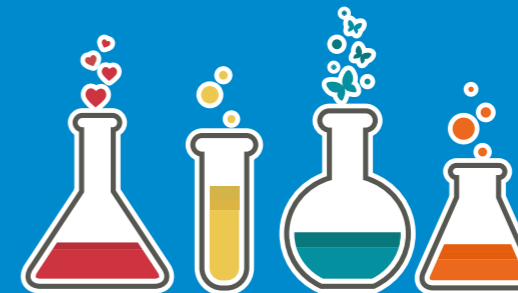
I'm mainly involved in production planning, which means I make sure that all the chemicals are available, that the manufacturing regulations are up to date, etc. During the production campaign, I coordinate processes between production, analytics and other departments. At the end of the process, a report is written and then it usually starts all over again. As CARBOGEN AMCIS AG is a contract manufacturer, there are meetings with customer representatives in between, which you also deal with.

What in particular do you like about your job at CARBOGEN AMCIS?

My job is extremely varied, as I have a function that in most other companies is spread over several heads. This makes the work extremely exciting, as you often never quite know what the day will bring. Of course, sometimes it's challenging, but I would never swap it for a job where the working week is planned out in advance.

What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?

Looking back, I had no idea what to expect in the industry, so it was a real change for me at the beginning. Nevertheless, I recommend taking the plunge into the unknown, it's the only way to develop personally and professionally.



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Switzerland: •• Bubendorf •• Aarau •• Hunzenschwil •• Vionnaz Worldwide: •• Manchester •• Saint-Beauzire •• Veenendaal •• Shanghai

Luca Bühler, 28

MSc ETH in Management, Technology & Economics
Trainee Innovation & Product Development at **CKW**

How did you find your job?

I discovered my current position at CKW by actively searching for entry-level positions in my area of interest. I set up job subscriptions to receive automatic notifications about new positions. This way, I was immediately notified by email as soon as my current trainee position was posted.

What influenced your decision to join CKW?

Early in my studies, I knew I wanted to enter the energy sector. Due to its size and regional significance, I chose CKW as a company where I could have a positive impact on the energy transition in Switzerland. I was particularly excited about the many areas in which CKW is active, spanning from electricity production to serving end customers.

What does a typical working day at CKW look like?

As a product manager, I optimize the operation of established products, further develop them, and adapt them to market changes. In small teams, I also conceptualize and develop new innovative electricity products. Furthermore, the traineeship provides me with the opportunity to familiarize myself with other departments and working methods.

What in particular do you like about your job at CKW?

I appreciate the diversity of tasks and their relevance. At the same time, I value the flexibility in working hours, the pleasant working environment, and the friendly interaction among colleagues.

What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?

If you have a keen interest in an industry but remain uncertain about the specific area you wish to work in, internships and trainee programs during or after your studies present excellent opportunities. This approach allows you to gain practical experience and get insights into various areas without making an early committing prematurely. If you already have a well-defined career goal, a direct entry may be the more fitting choice. In cases where no suitable positions are available, taking the initiative and reaching out to companies directly is also a viable option.

Marion
Business Intelligence
Engineer

My job's not 'a man's work' – it's a woman's work, too.

#jazumorgen

ckw.ch/karriere

CKW.

Patrick Häubi, 29

MSc ETH Mechanical Engineering (MAVT)

System Owner Visual Inspection and Packaging at **CSL****How did you find your job?**

I got in touch with CSL at the Polymesse Career Fair. During my Engineering Graduate Trainee Program with four rotations, each six months, I liked the position of a System Owner the most.

What influenced your decision to join CSL?

My work has an impact on the daily life and health of millions of people. On top CSL has a very interesting product portfolio and exciting processes in a global company with a strong presence in Switzerland.

What does a typical working day at CSL look like?

I am responsible for the technical strategy of our plants. I plan and lead GMP relevant hardware and software improvement projects. I am also the contact person for cross-functional plant issues and for coordinating maintenance down time. In addition, I lead a change project at the Bern site.

What in particular do you like about your job at CSL?

The work is rich in variety, and you learn to take on responsibility at an early stage. I can contribute to the identification of which projects should be tackled. There is also interaction at all levels, from manufacturing environment to site management.

What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?

Follow your passion and research possible positions and companies early on. Also reflect on the values of a company, as they will be important to your work environment. If you would like to pursue a career in the industry, get as much experience in the industry as possible during your studies. My master's thesis in the industry was a door opener for my professional entry. Don't be afraid, there is no right or wrong. Every experience is an enrichment. Your career is flexible, shape your job and your career path. In the words of Abraham Lincoln: "The best way to predict the future is to create it."

CSL

Discover Your Future at CSL



Driven by **Our Promise**

Patrick Madani, 25

BSc ETH in Information Technology

Software Engineer at **ELCA****How did you find your job?**

I found out about the job at ELCA via LinkedIn. I was also able to apply directly via the social media platform.

What influenced your decision to join ELCA?

As a large IT service provider, ELCA offers me the opportunity to work on multifaceted projects in various industries. In addition, I get to familiarise myself with many new technologies and areas of software development. Moreover, the company supports internal mobility - i.e. changing projects - if required. Such benefits can only be offered by a big company like ELCA.

What does a typical working day at ELCA look like?

I mainly develop and support applications for our customers. I need to understand the complete technology stack (frontend, backend, DevOps) to take meaningful action. Moreover, I regularly meet with customers, business analysts, and project managers. Therefore, I experience a lot of diversity in my day-to-day work, and no two days are the same.

What in particular do you like about your job at ELCA?

In addition to the variety, I am facing new challenges every day. I'm currently working on a new project that could have a significant impact on the Swiss IT landscape. Projects with a positive and major impact motivate me to do my best and seek the best solutions. Moreover, I like collaborating with my team colleagues, from whom I can learn a lot. I also enjoy our team- and office events - they are really fun.

What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?

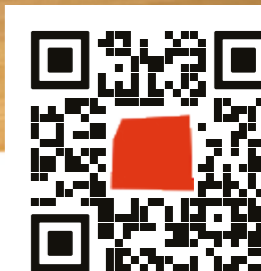
Apply for all positions you're interested in - even those that don't perfectly match your profile. Furthermore, you should not only focus on your technical skills, as soft skills are also crucial for team projects. Before the interview, you should, of course, inform yourself about the company and its activities.



As a Software Engineer at ELCA, I contribute to the digital transformation of Switzerland.

Patrick Madani
JAVA Engineer

Have a look at our open positions for graduates!



ELCA
careers.elca.ch

Romina Som, 29

MSc ETH in Computer Science

Software Engineer at **Ergon Informatik****How did you find your job?**

I first heard about Ergon when one of the company's founders came to present Ergon at a programming contest I attended during my bachelor's. He made the corporate culture sound so appealing that I wanted to work at Ergon from then on. Once I finished my master's, I applied for a job as a software engineer and was lucky enough to be taken on straight away.

What influenced your decision to join Ergon?

A few of my friends did internships at Ergon and really loved it there. Something that particularly appealed to me is that you work in fixed teams but still take on a range of varied projects. The fact that I don't have to work at the customer's location but in the Ergon offices – and that there is no dress code – was a massive plus for me.

What does a typical working day at Ergon look like?

Most of my day I spend on programming and code reviews. To discuss upcoming tasks, my team has a daily meeting, after which I often have to talk things through in more detail

with colleagues or customers as well. Apart from that, I'm free to organise my work as I like. It's not a problem if I want to work from home, take a long lunch break or finish early.

What in particular do you like about your job at Ergon?

I find it particularly enriching to be surrounded by like-minded people. Also, no matter what I'm working on, I can always find someone with more experience than me who can teach me something new. I'm never bored and am always learning new things. I felt like I was taken seriously from my first day here, as we have flat hierarchies and so I have always been able to get involved in a lot of different topics.

What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?

It can often be difficult to see what a company's culture is really like. Talk to as many current employees as possible so that you can ask all the questions you want. Ergon offers you the opportunity to organise a coffee meetup with a current employee: ergon.ch/meet-us-for-coffee.

Make a smart move!

In the heart of Zurich, we use digitalisation trends to create unique benefits for our clients – from the initial idea right through to market success. Ergon combines technology, security and business expertise to design "smart" solutions from complex requirements.

Meet us for coffee and let's get to know each other.



40 years

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ergon

smart people – smart software®

Pascal Müller, 29

Master of Science ETH in Robotics, Systems and Control (MSc ETH RSC)

Project Engineer at **Helbling Technik****How did you find your job?**

I first got in touch with Helbling Technik during the Polymesse. The interesting discussion led me to submit a spontaneous application at the end of my studies.

What influenced your decision to join Helbling?

The decisive factor was the opportunity to gain experience in a vast diversity of development projects early on in my professional career. Furthermore, I greatly valued the broad range of further training opportunities to continuously expand my knowledge.

What does a typical working day at Helbling look like?

Due to the great amount of variety, the typical working day is very diversified. Depending on the customer and the project phase, different technologies, and approaches are used. For example, a joint workshop with the customer during the concept phase, or the implementation of an algorithm as a proof of concept. As a Project Engineer in the field of optics and software, I can make valuable contributions in all project phases and can directly apply my broad ETH knowledge as well as learn new methods.

What in particular do you like about your job at Helbling?

The customer spectrum ranges from small startups to market-leading technology corporations. The requirements are often complex and vary between projects. The process of finding a solution requires a high degree of flexibility and adaptability and demands the frequent use of new technologies. Mastering these challenges together with the project team makes the work at Helbling Technik very diverse and interesting.

What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?

Take the time and the opportunity to choose a job that matches your own interests and take up the challenges in the job profile.



Our versatility is your benefit.

As a leading engineering company, we develop innovative solutions for our customers from numerous different industries. As broad as our range of services is, so varied are your possibilities to become part of our successful team.

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Yuki Meier, 27

MSc ETH Materials Science and Engineering

Project Manager Local Service Center Switzerland, High Voltage Service, **Hitachi Energy Ltd.**

How did you find your job?

During my master's thesis, a conversation with a fellow student drew my attention to Hitachi Energy. After attending the "Polyvortrag", it was clear to me that I wanted to apply for the Power+ Graduate Program, the global trainee program for STEM graduates at Hitachi Energy.

What influenced your decision to join Hitachi Energy?

Hitachi Energy stands for a sustainable and secure energy future. The company's core values played an essential role in my decision. The proximity to the product, the leading technology, and the international environment were also among the deciding factors. Furthermore, the Power+ program offers the perfect opportunity to get to know different departments of the company.

What does a typical working day at Hitachi Energy look like?

My day-to-day work varies greatly from day to day, from project planning and preparation to support and resolving unexpected incidents. One constant component is the proximity and connection to the team: internal meetings for

organizational and technical clarifications, external meetings for project kick-offs and construction site planning.

What in particular do you like about your job at Hitachi Energy?

I appreciate the diversity of the projects because we cover the entire High Voltage product portfolio at the local service center. Some products are older than I am, so no two projects are the same. I also like that I can maintain close customer relationships in my job and respond to customer needs. The learning curve remains steep, and yet I notice that I am becoming more independent and can train new employees myself.

What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?

Be curious and ask questions. Have the courage to try new things and, above all, take a path that interests you. I recommend you talk to employees at the company you want to apply to. This will give you a more accurate picture of the company, the job, the team, and the culture.



We are advancing the world's energy system to be more sustainable, flexible and secure.

As the pioneering technology leader, we collaborate with customers and partners to enable a sustainable energy future – for today's generations and those to come. Advancing a sustainable energy future for all!



hitachienergy.com/careers

Luca Varano, 26

MSc ETH in Electrical Engineering and Information Technology
Software Engineer at **Leica Geosystems part of Hexagon**

How did you find your job?

I conducted my master thesis project together with Leica Geosystems. After completing my master studies, I decided that I wanted to work more closely with software, so I applied for a position as a Software Engineer.

What influenced your decision to join Leica Geosystems?

As I grew up in vicinity of the headquarter of Leica Geosystems, I already knew the company and was always fascinated by its products. After finishing my Master Thesis my interest did not fade away, so I decided to apply for a position.

What does a typical working day at Leica Geosystems look like?

In the morning I usually first check my emails to see if there are any urgent new tasks. Afterwards I join the daily team meeting. Programming, meetings, technical conversations with team members, and testing sessions often fill the remaining hours of the day.

What in particular do you like about your job at Leica Geosystems?

Leica Geosystems is working in an industry where each product must meet highest accuracy standards, therefore it is necessary to obtain the best possible performance out of the available hardware. As a Software Engineer I really get the time to optimize the firmware to achieve the best performance.

What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?

Even when you finish your studies, you still learn plenty of new things. For the initial position I would seek out a company that would provide me the chance to learn a lot of new things quickly.



HEXAGON



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Help us to improve the future, become part of our team and a global success story.

Interested in more information about career opportunities with us? Visit us!



Aya Ashour, 32

MSc ETH in Cell Biology

Associate Clinical Scientist at **Novartis****How did you find your job?**

As much as I enjoyed the curiosity and exploration space in research, I was interested to move closer to patients and contribute to translational medicine. I got to know about the Clinical Sciences & Innovation (CS&I) Academy in Novartis. This 2-year fellowship had allowed me to further evolve in the clinical research field and reach my current role as Associate Clinical Scientist.

What influenced your decision to join Novartis?

Based on discussions with friends who have moved from academia to industry and courses on LinkedIn/Coursera, I have developed this passion towards clinical research as a transformation step between drug discovery and bringing innovative therapies to clinics.

What does a typical working day at Novartis look like?

I am co-leading early phase interventional trials. This involves the design and execution of First in Human (FIH) and Proof of Concept (PoC) trials. During my day, I am collaborating with internal and external stakeholders including vendors and clinical sites to plan and achieve study deliverables. I am also contributing to the development of different clinical

trial documents. In addition, I contribute to the review, analysis, and presentation of anonymized data from clinical trial participants.

What in particular do you like about your job at Novartis?

I like that every day is different and carries new learning opportunities. I particularly enjoy interactions with colleagues from diverse expertise and cultural backgrounds.

What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?

Build a diverse network of connections to open your horizon about possible career paths. In addition, focus on developing your soft skills through courses and practice.

Changing the practice of medicine

Helping people with disease and their families takes more than innovative science.

It takes a community of smart, passionate people who are collaborating, supporting and inspiring each other.

You'll find this community here at Novartis, where we are reimagining medicine to improve and extend people's lives.



Pascal Siemon, 28

MSc ETH in Mathematik

Consultant / Software Engineer bei **Oepfelbaum IT Management AG****Wie hast Du Deine Stelle gefunden?**

Meine Faszination für komplexe Zusammenhänge und Technik führte mich früh in die Welt der Software-Entwicklung. Nach meinem Start ins Berufsleben wurde mir klar, dass ich gerne vertieftes Fachwissen in einer Branche aufbauen möchte. Die Kombination von Banking und IT bei Oepfelbaum fand ich schon bei den Messebesuchen während des Studiums spannend.

Warum hast Du dich für die Oepfelbaum entschieden?

Das Auftreten der Kolleg:innen überzeugte mich von Anfang an. Man spürt sofort, dass der Slogan «oepplis bewege» keine leeren Worte sind und alle immer das Ziel vor Augen haben, die beste Lösung zu finden. Gleichzeitig ist das Miteinander sehr kollegial und humorvoll. Weitere Gründe waren die Firmengrösse und die über 20-jährige Erfolgsgeschichte von Oepfelbaum.

Wie sieht Dein Arbeitsalltag bei Oepfelbaum aus?

Kein Tag ist wie der andere! Ich kümmere mich beim Kunden immer wieder aufs Neue um abwechslungsreiche Herausforderungen. An manchen Tagen schreibe ich Code, an anderen suche ich Anomalien in einer gewaltigen Daten-

menge, optimiere Berechnungen oder fungiere als Übersetzer zwischen Fach und Entwicklung. Dabei kommt der Austausch mit den Kolleg:innen von Oepfelbaum dank zahlreicher Events nicht zu kurz.

Was schätzt Du besonders an Deiner Tätigkeit bei Oepfelbaum?

Es ist toll zu sehen, dass meine Initiativen und Ideen etwas bewirken. Das kann einerseits beim Kunden sein, aber auch innerhalb von Oepfelbaum. Überall besteht die Möglichkeit, sich schnell, unkompliziert und auf Augenhöhe einzubringen.

Was empfiehlst Du Studierenden für ihren Karriereestieg?

Besucht Messen und lasst euch von eurer Neugier treiben. In ungezwungener und spontaner Atmosphäre lernt man am meisten über potenzielle Arbeitgeber. Lasst euch nicht von Job-Inseraten – vor allem in der IT – einschüchtern. Hinter vielen kryptischen Abkürzungen stecken Dinge, die man in nert weniger Tage im Berufsalltag lernt. Und vor allem, schickt uns euren CV!

BANKING. TECH. SCHWEIZ.

oepfelbaum
BANKING TECHNOLOGY EXPERTS



Mach deine
Leidenschaft fürs
Knifflige zum Beruf –
bei uns geht das!

← **PASCAL SIEMON**
Software Engineer
Rätsellöser
Oepfelbäumler



Jair Wyler, 32

MSc ETH in Micro and Nanosystems

Product Leader Core Lab & Point of Care Instruments at Roche

How did you find your job?

During my studies at ETH Zurich, I did not know that Roche had a Diagnostics Division and thus I was not really interested in Roche as an employer. I got to know Roche as an engineering consultant. It quickly became clear to me that I wanted to join this great company and so I ended up with a job as a Validation Expert.

What influenced your decision to join Roche?

Roche is a global player in the healthcare sector and has committed to improving patient lives. This principle is lived in all areas and is a driver for all decisions. The opportunities for personal development as well as the culture of respecting each other and mastering challenges together are additional factors that have fuelled my decision.

What does a typical working day at Roche look like?

Together with my team, I am responsible for ensuring that our products are available on the market on time and in the right quality. We are responsible for all topics revolving around the product, from technical changes and ensuring material availability to finally manufacturing and testing the products. I am in charge of coordinating all these tasks. For

this purpose, I lead meetings, work out timelines and also clarify technical issues with the relevant subject matter experts.

What in particular do you like about your job at Roche?

Firstly, I find great fulfilment in knowing that my work directly contributes to improving the lives of patients. It is incredibly rewarding to be part of a company that is dedicated to developing innovative healthcare solutions. Secondly, the opportunity to work alongside a team of motivated individuals is truly inspiring. Additionally, Roche provides many opportunities to engage in technical and organisational problem-solving, which helps me grow both professionally and personally.

What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?

Be curious and try to have many different experiences. This way you will quickly learn what you enjoy and what you are good at. Use your network, be it from your studies, friends or family. And finally, do not allow yourself to be discouraged, and live your dreams.

**We are Roche**

We advance science so that we all have more time with the people we love.

Together we embrace the unique power of each person to transform the lives of patients & society. Innovation drives everything we do to improve people's lives. We work with a purpose, and make an impact.

Join us and shape your own career at a company that cares about what makes working here a rewarding experience.

careers.roche.com



Léo De Meyer, 27

MSc MTEC

Project Manager at **ROLEX****How did you find your job?**

As a student, I did an internship at Rolex. During that period, I heard about the Spirale management training programme, which I am now part of. It involves completing four placements in different services and divisions over two years, with a view to taking on a managerial position in the future.

What influenced your decision to join Rolex?

I appreciate the fact that Rolex produces its watches in Switzerland, and that it controls the entire manufacturing process. I'm still impressed by our ability to transform raw materials, for example, into finished watches of exceptional quality. The fact that Rolex belongs to the Hans Wilsdorf Foundation is also important, given the environmental, social and cultural projects it supports.

What does a typical working day at Rolex look like?

My current placement, which is also my first, is as a project manager working on industrial strategy for the Acacias site. I analyse the approaches used in other industries to under-

stand whether we could improve our own workflows. My job requires a lot of interaction, and I appreciate both the practical and social aspects of this work.

What in particular do you like about your job at Rolex?

It is very rewarding to be able to discover all the different aspects of production thanks to having direct access to the workshops. It enables me to take in lots of useful information and quickly get up to speed with the field of work. I also really like having a supervisor as part of the mentoring system.

What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?

I think it is important to work for a company that shares the same values as you and makes a product that you like. It is also preferable to complete an internship with the company first, to see whether you fit with the way it is run.

www.carrieres-rolex.com



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Apply now!


ROLEX

Pascal Gasser, 27

MSc ETH in Mechanical Engineering

F-5 and F/A-18 project manager at **RUAG Ltd.****How did you find your job?**

I found the systems engineer internship advertised on RUAG's job portal and applied. That opened up some great opportunities for me to change jobs within the company.

Why did you choose RUAG?

RUAG makes an important contribution to Swiss security, promotes innovation and has an open corporate culture, which reflects my personal values. As an officer in the Swiss Air Force, I have always been interested in military aviation systems and their maintenance and wanted to be able to apply this experience professionally.

What is your daily work routine at RUAG like?

At RUAG, I have the opportunity to implement various projects on different systems and optimize processes. The projects are often structural or specific modifications of aircraft components, which I accompany from the feasibility study to series integration. In addition to defining the work packages, this also includes resource planning and cost estimation. Optimizing business processes includes adapting documentation and integration in coordination with various specialist groups.

What do you like most about working at RUAG?

I meet new people who work in the aviation industry in the project teams and during investigations, which constantly expands my network. Suggestions for improving existing processes are accepted and we work together to find and implement solutions. There are also plenty of opportunities to contribute new ideas and take on responsibility. The work is rewarded and there is enough freedom to balance work and free time.

What would you recommend to students looking to start their careers?

In addition to getting a degree, soft skills and work experience are crucial. During your studies, try to gain as much experience as you can through internships, summer jobs, or part-time work. Not only will this expand your network, but it will also strengthen your soft skills, and you will be better at assessing future requirements.

«RUAG makes an important contribution to Swiss security, promotes innovation and has an open corporate culture, which reflects my personal values.»



➤ CONVINCE YOURSELF!



Bettina Maurer, 25

MSc ETH in Integrated Building Systems
Software Developer (R&D) at **Siemens**

How did you find your job?

I did an internship at Siemens in the field of building services engineering between my bachelor's and master's degrees and continued working there during my master's degree. After finishing my Master's, I was encouraged to apply for a full-time position as a software developer, even though (I felt that) there were many requirements that I didn't meet.

Why did you decide to take a job at Siemens?

The position matches my interests and allows me both to use my education and to develop myself further in the direction of software development. The opportunity to make a real contribution to energy efficiency in buildings is also a big factor for me. In addition, Siemens offers flexible working conditions, 2–3 days of home office per week and attractive internal training and career opportunities.

What does your typical work day at Siemens look like?

Our team develops the control logic for building systems at room level. My day-to-day work involves a lot of independent work developing software and integrating devices, but always exchanging with software and system architects and colleagues in other teams.

What's the best thing about your work at Siemens?

The systems we develop use innovative technologies to improve the energy efficiency and carbon footprint of buildings. This makes my work varied and meaningful for me. In addition, I work with excellent team colleagues from whom I can learn and receive targeted support.

What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?

Apply for everything that interests you. Don't let it hold you back if you feel that you don't have the right background for a position or don't meet all the requirements. After all, studying at ETH proves that you learn quickly and are able to acquire new skills. Therefore, believe in yourself and give it your best shot.

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At Siemens, we are always challenging ourselves to build a better future and impact society. We need the most innovative and diverse minds to develop tomorrow's reality.

[siemens.ch/employer/en](https://www.siemens.ch/employer/en)

Timothy Mallor, 26

MSc ETH in Management, Technology and Economics
Risk Consultant at **Swiss Re**

How did you find your job?

I had been aware of Swiss Re for a while already. Having done an internship in the insurance industry, Swiss Re was a familiar name to me. I learned about the graduate programme through Swiss Re's website and applied to a position which fitted well to my study background and personal interests.

What influenced your decision to join Swiss Re?

The opportunity to take part in the graduate programme, do rotations and attend specific trainings and learn about the different functions of the company made it very attractive. The programme is designed to help graduates be well connected within Swiss Re. Plus it's an international company and I hope I will have opportunities to spend time in different countries and experience other work cultures.

What does a typical working day at Swiss Re look like?

In my function, we offer consulting services to insurance companies. For example, we analyse their portfolio's exposure to natural catastrophes or help refine the insurer's

pricing. I do a lot of the hands-on data analysis. In addition, I also have exchanges with in-house experts for input on certain topics and participate in presenting the results to clients.

What in particular do you like about your job at Swiss Re?

I enjoy the creativity of searching for new data sources. And thinking how best to put those to use to quantify risk. Swiss Re also encourages employees to interact with colleagues across the company. There are many people with interesting and diverse backgrounds. That leads to insightful and fun discussions.

What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?

Most importantly make sure you enter a field where you genuinely enjoy the work. In terms of a job search, I focused on skills that I wanted to continue improving upon in my career and then looked for positions where I could further develop them – technical and soft skills.



Make an impact

#yourpartnerforprogress

Simone Brönnimann, 27

MSc ETH in Raumentwicklung und Infrastruktursysteme

Trainee beim **Tiefbauamt der Stadt Zürich**

Wie haben Sie Ihre Stelle gefunden?

Ich wurde am KTH auf das Trainee-Programm des Tiefbauamts aufmerksam gemacht und erhielt an der jährlichen Infoveranstaltung im Tiefbauamt einen Einblick in die verschiedenen Tätigkeiten.

Warum haben Sie sich für das Tiefbauamt der Stadt Zürich entschieden?

Ich wohne seit Längerem in der Stadt Zürich. Es reizte mich, aktiv an der Gestaltung der Strassenräume mitzuwirken und mir vertraute Orte genauer zu untersuchen. Die interdisziplinäre Arbeit und das eigenständige Planen und Umsetzen von kleineren Projekten waren für mich entscheidende Gründe für die Stelle.

Wie sieht Ihr Arbeitsalltag beim Tiefbauamt aus?

Aktuell arbeite ich in der Abteilung Planung + Projektierung. Mein Mentor hat mir zwei Bauprojekte übertragen, an denen ich nun selbständig arbeite. Ich leite Sitzungen mit dem Projektteam, tausche mich mit anderen Mitarbeiter*innen aus, lese mich in neue Themenbereiche ein und

setze mich mit den hohen Ansprüchen an den öffentlichen Raum auseinander.

Was schätzen Sie besonders an Ihrer Tätigkeit beim Tiefbauamt?

Die Begleitung von Projekten von der Vorstudie bis zur Umsetzung verschafft mir einen umfassenden Einblick. Ich schätze den fachübergreifenden Austausch hier im Tiefbauamt, die Möglichkeit mit externen Büros zusammenzuarbeiten und die tägliche Bedürfnisabwägung in meiner Arbeit. Zudem lerne ich viel über den politischen Einfluss auf unsere Tätigkeiten.

Was empfehlen Sie Studierenden für ihren Karriereestieg?

Bewirbt euch an verschiedenen Orten und nutzt die Bewerbungsgespräche als Lernmöglichkeit. Versucht aktiv, euer Wissen in die Praxis einzubringen und profitiert von interdisziplinären Teams, deren vielfältigen Fachkenntnissen und Herangehensweisen.

Karriere-Start



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

Alexandra Schneider, 24

BSc ETH in Electrical Engineering and Information Technology
Software Engineer at UBS

How did you come across your position?

I've always been interested in finance, and UBS is well-known in Switzerland, so, I found the job portal and applied for the Graduate Talent Program.

What influenced your decision to join UBS?

In high school, I focused on economics and law. At university, I studied electrical engineering, and worked on my programming skills. When combining my technical skills with my strong interest in finance, applying to UBS felt like a perfect step.

What does a typical working day at UBS look like?

As a Software Developer, typically my day starts with coding, and handling documentation. Then I share updates with my team, and catch up with coworkers to get advice, but what I also appreciate is that my perspective is heard. Outside of my role, I really enjoy working on UBS initiatives, such as our yearly volunteering programs.

What do you enjoy most about your job at UBS?

The culture. To me, this is the most important part because it impacts all other areas. The support is amazing – whenever I have an idea, I get the backing I need to make it happen. I also have the freedom and trust to experiment and do things independently.

What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?

To connect with friends from different workplaces and understand their work cultures. Ask yourself whether you'd consider working there. Then, think like you are also interviewing the company – when interviewing for internships or full-time positions, ask a lot of questions to see if it's a good fit for both. Lastly, be proactive. It will make you stand out and will reward you with unexpected opportunities.



More than
lines of code

Engineer change. Engineer at UBS.

ubs.com/techcareers



Piet De Vaere, 29

Dr. sc. ETH Zurich (Computer Science)

Lead Security Architect at **Zühlke Engineering AG****How did you find your job?**

A colleague from our research group also joined Zühlke after his PhD. He introduced me to the company and arranged an informal visit for me. Afterwards, I applied to an open position and went through the formal interview process.

What influenced your decision to join Zühlke?

I interviewed with a fair number of companies, both in the product and services area. Zühlke is great because it combines the diversity of consulting work with the hands-on aspects that you would typically only find in a product or an engineering company. I was also very impressed by the interview process: my interviews at Zühlke were the only ones that really tested my security knowledge.

What does a typical working day at Zühlke look like?

We have very flexible working conditions, so there is almost no such thing as a typical working day. Unless your presence is required (e.g., because of an in-person client meeting), you are free to work from wherever you want. We can also pick our own working hours.

What in particular do you like about your job at Zühlke?

When I do go to the office, the atmosphere is great. The building is modern, the food is good, and all colleagues are friendly and approachable. Although not everything is perfect (as in all companies), you really notice that everyone is happy to work here.

What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?

Start looking for a job early, and take your time to explore the market. By the time you've gone through the various rounds at a company, multiple weeks will likely have passed. Ideally, start by scheduling some interviews for jobs where you won't be disappointed if you don't get an offer. Interviewing is a skill, and as with everything, practice makes perfect. Take interviews in different sectors, and with different types of companies. Try to schedule the interviews so that, ideally, you'll receive all the offers you're seriously considering around the same time.

Do work that matters

We empower ideas and create new business models by developing services and products based on new technologies – from initial vision through development, deployment, production, and beyond. Our cross-functional teams are located in ten countries, from Europe to Asia, and they collaborate globally.

Do you want to be part of our network? We are looking for team players who love to work in an agile environment with inspiring customers and colleagues at every stage of their career.

Interested? Apply now!



zühlke
empowering ideas

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 Bite” 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.

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 Union of ETH
- **Student Associations** of each ETH department
- **AVETH:** Association of doctoral students at ETH Zurich
- **ETH juniors:** ETH student-led consultancy carrying out projects in the industry and connecting students with companies
- **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
- **Entrepreneur Club:** An ETH association that brings together students who are interested in entrepreneurship and helps them pursue their business ideas

Where are you headed?

 Every spring semester

 ETH Zürich

poly↔**messe**

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 (HG) and on the Polyterrasse.

poly↔**vortrag**

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**

Social networking platforms

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: Information about careers, training, further education and job platforms for engineers
- www.industrie-schweiz.ch: A directory of Swiss industrial associations
- www.sia.ch: Swiss Society of Engineers and Architects
- www.swissengineering.ch: Swiss Engineering
- www.scienceindustries.ch: Swiss business association for the chemical, pharmaceutical and biotech industries
- www.svia.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.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.

Mila Werdtli
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.

7 Who's viewed your profile 51 Views of your share

Experience

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
- ...

Education

ETH 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
- ...

ETH 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, flyers, newsletter
- ...

Featured Skills & Endorsements

Biomedical Engin... 1 Endorsed by Jennifer Aytanc and 1 other who is highly skilled at this

Heat Transfer 45 Endorsed by 45 connections

Biocompatibility 5 Endorsed by 5 connections

Education

Include information about degrees acquired and schools attended.

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.

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.

Accomplishments

4 Languages
German
Native or bilingual proficiency
English
Full professional proficiency
Spanish
Professional working proficiency
Chinese
Elementary proficiency

1 Project
Young Projekt Switzerland
– leading a mini-company with 4 project members
– development, production and selling of handmade bags
–
Sep 2009 – Feb 2010

Teammates

Following

Liummus
85,202 followers

ETH Zurich
70,091 followers

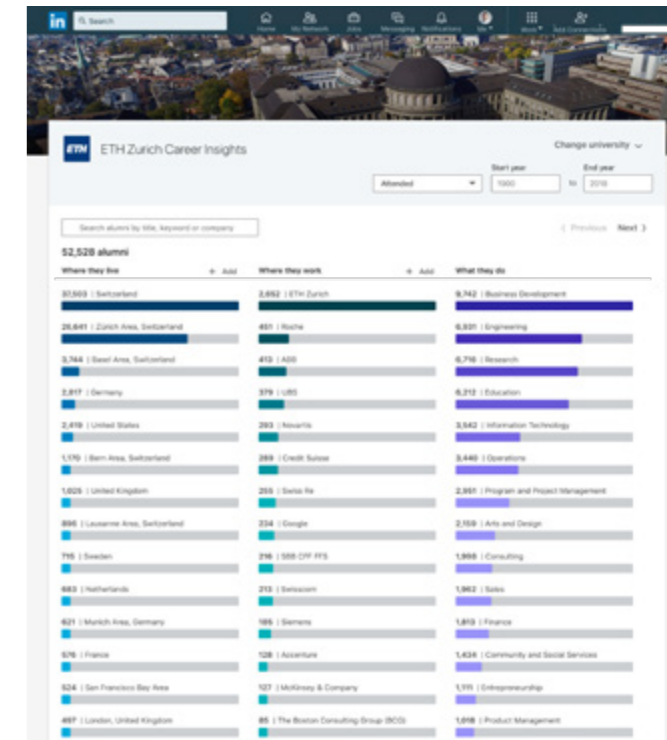
Medphabi
218,138 followers

Pulse
1,460,563 followers

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).

**NB:**

We recommend that you go to *Settings & Privacy / Visibility / Share profile updates...* and set *Share profile updates* to *Off*. That way, your contacts will not get a notification every time you update your profile.



Career?

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www.alumni.ethz.ch/career-services

Alumni



Giulia Amos (r.), Health Sciences and Technology Student at ETH Zurich, had her 3-months internship at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital in Nigeria

Living in Nigeria has taught me a lot more about life than any book could do and has deeply changed my perception of the world.

When I was back in Lagos to catch my flight home, I could look back on three very adventurous months in a country that is pretty much the opposite of everything that I knew from home. Nigeria offered the opportunity for an extremely immersive cultural experience, with many lasting impressions and encounters. The locals always welcomed me with a big smile and an enthusiastic "Welcome to Nigeria", whether at work or during my pastime activities on campus. Working at a hospital in a developing nation meant dealing with many technical, financial, and cultural challenges, which taught me to approach difficulties in a more creative and open-minded way. Beside work, I was able to go on numerous trips to different corners of this complex country and learn about its diverse beliefs. This internship enabled me to gain a new perspective and concentrate on the essential, for which I am grateful.

IAESTE offers

- ✓ Paid Internships (6 weeks to 12 months)
- ✓ Application Support and Social Network
- ✓ International Work Experience

Find your internship on our website:



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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.careerjet.ch
- www.monster.ch
- www.indeed.ch
- www.science-jobs.ch
- www.jobs.ch
- www.students.ch
- www.jobscout24.ch
- www.topjobs.ch

You will find more links on our homepage. Some student associations also maintain small job platforms on their website.

Specialised job portals by sector / field of interest:

- **Architecture / construction:** www.baujob.ch, www.archforum.ch
- **Banking:** www.efinancialcareers.ch
- **Geology:** www.geologieportal.ch
- **Geomatics / planning:** www.geomatik.ch
- **Computer sciences:** www.itjobs.ch, www.job-box.ch, www.workfinder.ch, www.turing-jobs.com
- **Engineering:** www.ingjobs.ch
- **Life sciences / chemicals:** www.nobel-jobs.com, www.chemiker-jobs.ch
- **Math:** www.math-jobs.com
- **Public sector:** www.publicjobs.ch
- **Physics:** www.tesla-jobs.com
- **Pharma / healthcare:** www.pharmastellen.ch, www.pharmapro.ch
- **Environmental / nature conservation:** www.naturschutz.ch, www.umweltprofis.ch, www.oebu.ch
- **Non-profit organisations:** www.sinndrin.ch, www.kampajobs.ch, www.cinfo.ch
- **Academia:** www.myscience.ch/jobs



Events

As you may recall from the [Exploration](#) chapter, career events such as the career events of the ETH Career Center 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. 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.

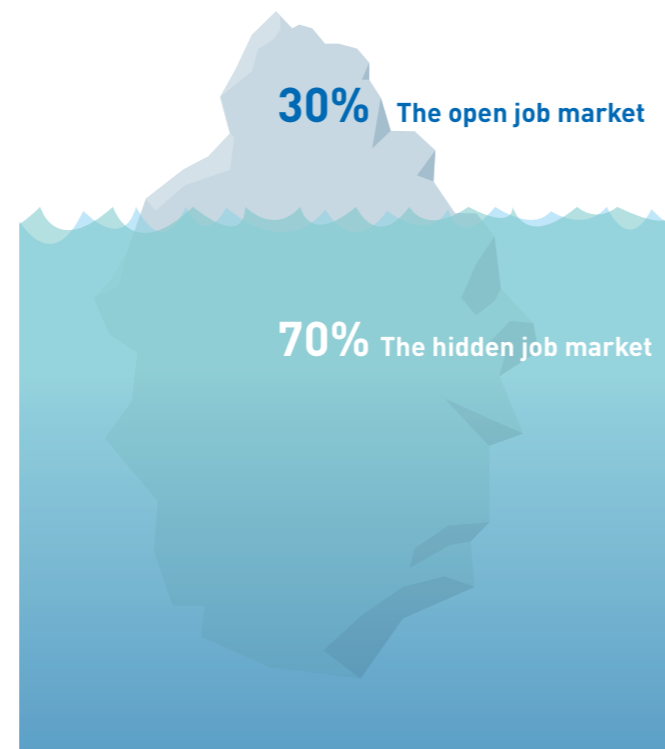


Proactive job search

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.

GeoSys AG
Mr. Max Sample
Sample Street 1
8000 Sampleville
000 000 00 00
www.geosys.ch

Experimental Physicist or Mechanical Engineer

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.

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](#)).



Required key competencies	Likely interpretation
Able to work under pressure	The job pressure may be greater than the industry norm.
Committed employee	Working hours may be irregular and overtime could be the rule.
Reliable employee	The company does not want a job hopper. Be prepared to stick with this job for several years.
Autonomy/self-reliance	Experience in the described field of activity is absolutely essential. Do not expect any technical or specialist support.
Flexibility	The task or role may be very vaguely defined.
Independence	Expect to work in various places. You probably have to travel or change locations. Children and family obligations may be a deterrent.
Entrepreneurial mindset	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.

Required key competencies	Likely interpretation
Initiative/proactive	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.
Loyalty	This may suggest challenging working conditions and a fickle boss.
A young, dynamic team	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.
To join at the earliest opportunity	The predecessor may have been fired or quit. This begs the question of why he or she left.

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.

My favourite companies	Activities
e.g. Helbling Technik	Participate in the Helbling "Career Livestream" organised by the Career Center
	Talk to Johann (alumnus currently working at Helbling)
	Consult and analyse current job openings at Helbling
	Participate in one of Helbling Technik's evening seminars

→ 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
- Panel discussions
- Events and workshops on specific career topics

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

Curriculum vitae

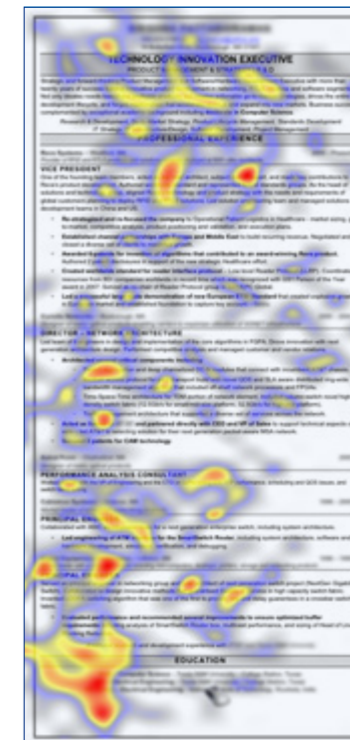
As we mentioned in this chapter’s introduction, HR managers usually decide whether or not to invite a candidate to an initial interview based on the CV. This is why it so important for you to present the information in your CV clearly and concisely.

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.

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.



Source: Eye Tracking Online Metacognition: Cognitive Complexity and Recruiter Decision Making. Will Evans, Head of User Experience Design, Ladders Inc., 2018; www.theladders.com.

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/interests
- 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.



Isabella Bernasconi
Zürcherstrasse 37
8610 Uster
Phone: +41 79 012 34 56
E-Mail: i.bernasconi@bluewin.ch

02.05.1996
Swiss / Italian

EDUCATION

10.2019 – 09.2021 **ETH Zurich, Master studies in Mechanical Engineering**
Major: Power-engineering, fluid mechanics
Minor: Data analysis, modeling
Master thesis: «Aero-Thermo-Mechanical System Integration and Design of an Axial Compressor in a High Altitude Airship»

10.2016 – 09.2019 **ETH Zurich, BSc in Mechanical Engineering**
Major: Robotics and intelligent systems
Bachelor thesis: «Numerical Simulation of Unsteady Separated Two-Dimensional Flow around a Circular Cylinder»

09.2016 **Alte Kantonsschule Aarau, High school diploma (Matura)**
Major: Mathematics and physics

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

10.2019 – 09.2020 **ETH Zürich, Laboratory for Energy Conversion (LEC): Teaching Assistant**
– Design and planning of system integration project for new components for the free-space laboratory
– Installation work on the free-space laboratory
– FRAP probes calibration

06.2019 – 10.2019 **Limmat Scientific AG, Zurich: Intern**
– Developed the measurement system for the whole probe free-jet calibration device and upgraded the data acquisition hardware
– Programmed LabView 8.0 and tested calibration
– Did measurements and aerodynamic calibration of perforated probes
– Created a technical instruction manual

10.2017 – ongoing **Media Markt Schweiz AG, Spreitenbach: Multimedia Sales Person**
– Customer service and sales

07.2014 – ongoing **Good News Productions AG, Glattbrugg: Stagehand and Security**
– Construction, dismantling and surveillance of concert infrastructures

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.

Scholarships and awards

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

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES	
Since 09.2019	Member of the AMIV Association (Akademische Maschinen- und Elektroingenieur Verein) at ETH Zurich – Helped organize the annual AMIV job fair
Since 09.2017	Coaching the Greifensee junior football team
FURTHER EDUCATION	
09.2018 – 11.2018	Project Management, Business Tools AG, Switzerland
11.2017 – 12.2017	Memory training techniques, ETH Zurich, Switzerland
SCHOLARSHIPS AND HONOURS	
Since 09.2019	Excellence Scholarship & Opportunity Programme (ESOP) – Received full scholarship, participated in mentoring program – Invited to join the ETH Foundation's network
2016	Award for best high school project, Alte Kantonsschule Aarau
LANGUAGES	
German	Native
Italian	Native
French	Good
English	Excellent; language studies at ISI Boston/USA 2017
Spanish	Basic
COMPUTER SKILLS	
Operating systems	Windows, LINUX, OSX
Engineering tools	Matlab, ANSYS CFD/ICEM CFD/Workbench, Aacad, Unigraphics NX4, Labview 8.0, C++
User software	MS Office
Internet / design	HTML, Flash, Photoshop
INTERESTS / HOBBIES	
Greifensee Football Club	Active player and volunteer in the organization committee
Other	Singing, Poker
REFERENCES	
	Available upon request

Language skills and stays abroad

- Be honest and realistic in assessing the current 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.
- Don't forget to list your mother tongue.
- Order the languages by relevance to the job with the native language in first place.

Computer skills

IT skills are grouped by type such as programming languages, operating systems, graphics programs, user software, etc.

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.

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.

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. 06.2019 – 10.2019: Toured South America).

Sample CV – doctoral student



02.05.1996
 Swiss citizen
 Ausbrüggstrasse 47, CH - 8810 Horgen
 +41 79 022 34 56
 d.kaufmann@muster.com

Daniel Kaufmann

EDUCATION

08/2016 – 09/2020 **Dr. sc. Laboratory of Computational Science and Engineering, ETH Zurich**
 Thesis title: «Investigations of Numerical Aberrations: Origins and Implications»

09/2014 – 07/2016 **MSc in Computational Science and Engineering, EPF Lausanne**
 Final grade 5.25/6

Master Thesis at Institute for Process Control Engineering, University of Florida (UF), Gainesville FL, USA (01/2016 – 07/2016)

- Modeling and model validation for a small articulated robot
- Developing a modern predictive control algorithm using Matlab/LabVIEW
- Successful implementation of algorithm on a real vehicle

Diploma Thesis, Grade 5.5/6

09/2011 – 08/2014 **BSc in Computational Science and Engineering, EPF Lausanne**
 Final Grade 5.15/6

Carnegie Mellon University (CMU), Pittsburgh PA, USA (08/2013 – 02/2014)
 Electrical Engineering, Exchange program
 Grade Point Average 3.9/4.0, on Dearnis List

06/2010 **Highschool diploma (Maturité Gymnasiale), Lycée-Collège des Creusets, Sion**
 Mathematics, Biology and Chemistry

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

08/2016 – 09/2020 **ETH Zürich, Computational Laboratory, Switzerland: Research Assistant**

- Responsible for control systems engineering in an interdisciplinary collaboration with GreatCorp., Basel, Switzerland
- Modeled and controlled Diesel injectors using Matlab/dSpace
- Teaching assistant for robust control and control experiments
- Supervised students writing semester theses
- Publishes research results, did presentations 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.

Military service

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

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.

05/2013 – 08/2013 **Ford Motor Company, Kansas City, USA: Summer Intern**

- Assisted the Ford Customer Service in the launch of the Ford Mustang vehicle
- Data-mining and Report generation for management using large data bases
- Served as a link between the customer and Ford engineering
- Collaborate on the creation of an intern tool to ensure information transfer
- Coordination of the annual intern summer party including: communications, event planning and team lead of volunteers

06/2011 – 08/2011 **GreatMachines Ltd., Stans: Basic Intern**

- Completed design projects using Unigraphics Software
- Served as apprentice in the area of milling, turning, drilling, welding

MILITARY SERVICE

08/2010 – 04/2011 **Basic training, Payerne, Switzerland**

LANGUAGES

German	Mother tongue
English	Proficient
French	Proficient
Italian	Advanced knowledge

TECHNIQUES

Matlab/ Simulink, dSpace, Control Desk LabVIEW, I-DEAS, Unigraphics, ANSYS

COMPUTER SKILLS

Pascal, C, LaTeX, MS-Office

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

03/2015 – 12/2015 **VIS (Verein der Informatik Studierenden), ETH Zurich: External Relations Manager**

- Strategy for international networking
- Customer acquisition as well as support of existing partners
- Organization and implementation of excursions

07/2014 **Workshop “Go Digital”, McKinsey & Company, Zurich, Switzerland**

- Set up an online shop
- Worked in a team and presented the project

SELECT PUBLICATIONS

- Lorem I., Lorem B., Lorem F., (2016), „Dolor sit amet, egestas fusce amet ornare feugiat vehicula ante, nulla ante pede et morbi. Et sed nam”, 17, 1-2, 163–198
- Lorem I., Lorem B., Lorem F., (2016), „Dolor sit amet, egestas fusce amet ornare feugiat vehicula ante, nulla ante pede et morbi. Et sed nam”, 17, 1-2, 163–198
- Lorem I., Lorem B., Lorem F., (2015), „Dolor sit amet, egestas fusce amet ornare feugiat vehicula ante, nulla ante pede et morbi. Et sed nam”, 17, 1-2, 163–198

HOBBIES

Mountaineering, Sailing, Scuba Diving, Reading

REFERENCES

Available upon request

Main differences

Main differences between CVs of BSc/MSc students and doctoral students

Bachelor/master students	Doctoral students
– CV max. 2 pages	– CV max. 3 pages
– 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".	– 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".
– Do not list publications unless the master thesis was published in a journal or the like.	– List titles of select publications in the CV if relevant to the position (max. 3).

Main differences in CVs for applications in industry and academia

Industry	Academia
– State the title of bachelor, master or doctoral thesis, but details only if they are relevant to the position.	– List details of bachelor's, master's and doctoral theses.
– You can list methods and laboratory experience, but details only if relevant.	– Indicate lab experience and describe working methods.
– Do not list conferences in your CV. If relevant, attach a complete list as a separate document.	– List participations in conferences.
– Names of professors are usually not listed unless he or she is well-connected throughout the company or publicly known.	– List professors' names.

Wherever you want to land with your application.



Ramzy S.
MSc ETH Masch.-Ing.

> www.eth-gethired.ch

ETH GET HIRED

The job platform for talent made in Switzerland



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.



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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 positions 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	Communication	Research
Analysieren	Abstimmen	Abhandeln
Ausführen	Ansprechen	Abklären
Betreuen	Beeinflussen	Beaufsichtigen
Delegieren	Beteiligen	Befragen
Empfehlen	Entwerfen	Diagnostizieren
Entwickeln	Formulieren	Erforschen
Erwirtschaften	Führen	Erläutern
Evaluiieren	Interpretieren	Evaluiieren
Führen	Mitarbeiten	Identifizieren
Konsolidieren	Mitverfassen	Organisieren
Koordinieren	Moderieren	Recherchieren
Leiten	Publizieren	Sammeln
Organisieren	Überzeugen	Systematisieren
Planen	Verfassen	Überprüfen
Prioritäten setzen	Verhandeln	Überwachen
Reorganisieren	Vermitteln	Untersuchen
Überprüfen	Vorschlagen	Zusammenfassen

Active verbs for German applications

Techniques	Teaching/Coaching	Accomplishments
Anpassen	Anleiten	Ableiten
Aufbauen	Ausbilden	Abschliessen
Aufzeigen	Bekräftigen	Beheben
Berechnen	Beraten	Beschleunigen
Durchführen	Bereitstellen	Bewirken
Entwerfen	Betreuen	Einführen
Entwickeln	Darlegen	Entdecken
Herstellen	Einführen	Erfinden
Instand halten	Ermöglichen	Erreichen
Instand setzen	Inspirieren	Erweitern
Kalkulieren	Klären	Erzielen
Konstruieren	Lehren	Gründen
Lösen	Motivieren	Konzipieren
Montieren	Repräsentieren	Lösen
Neu gestalten	Teilnehmen	Überzeugen
Programmieren	Überprüfen	Verdoppeln
Zusammenstellen	Unterstützen	Vermehrten

Active verbs for applications in English

Management	Communication	Research
Administer	Address	Clarify
Analyse	Author	Collect
Assign	Co-author	Critique
Consolidate	Collaborate	Diagnose
Coordinate	Correspond	Evaluate
Delegate	Develop	Examine
Develop	Direct	Extract
Direct	Influence	Identify
Evaluate	Interpret	Inspect
Execute	Lecture	Interpret
Organise	Mediate	Inspire
Plan	Moderate	Investigate
Prioritise	Negotiate	Organise
Recommend	Persuade	Review
Reorganise	Promote	Summarise
Review	Propose	Survey
Supervise	Publicise	Systemise

Active verbs for applications in English

Techniques	Teaching/Coaching	Accomplishments
Assemble	Assist	Achieve
Build	Clarify	Complete
Calculate	Coach	Convince
Compute	Counsel	Discover
Conceptualise	Demonstrate	Double
Design	Educate	Effect
Devise	Facilitate	Eliminate
Engineer	Familiarise	Expand
Fabricate	Guide	Found
Maintain	Inspire	Improve
Operate	Motivate	Increase
Perform	Participate	Initiate
Pinpoint	Provide	Introduce
Program	Reinforce	Invent
Remodel	Support	Launch
Repair	Teach	Reduce
Solve	Verify	Resolve

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.

Max Muster
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CH-8245 Feuerthalen
Phone: +41 52 367 83 47
Email: max.muster@gmx.ch

Management Consulting AG
MS Felicitas Braun
Viktoriastrasse 15
P.O. Box
3013 Bern

Zurich, 24 April 2021

Application for the position of Junior Consultant, ID # 293754

Dear Ms Braun,

Section 1: Lorem ipsum ut quod ferri defniebas quo, ius graeci laboramus honestatis, id ius nullam soluta partiendo. Duo te corpora prodesset positionum velit doctus an quo, id inani clita. No usu saperet appareat probatus, usu ipsum intellegebat ex.

Section 2: Dico Graecis copiosae per cu, ex eros intellegebat nec, ad mea debet oporteat repudiandae. Id vim graeci molestie takimata, quo nostrum conceptam an. Mei sale dicam eu. Sit porro concludaturque ex. Summo mundi mei ad. Soluta facilis eam no, facilis pertinacia eu cim. Graece suscipit qo at, nominavi salutatatus cu mel. Qui ut illum partem. Cu prima idque aperiri mel, sed modo interpretaris ut. Sea dicta eloquiam id, ea cum.

Section 3: Cu possit fierent intellegebat qui. Mei in vocent defniebas, cu assum convenire necessitatibus has. Vis verear quaestio accommodare no, id vis repudiare didi. Et quo vidit dicam dolore, in sed velit eripuit pertinax. Eam ea didcat zrril, quo aeterno comprehensam cu, his in enim vocent defniebas. Vivendo intellegat sea ut, et liber docendi.

Yours sincerely,
Max Muster

*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.

Max Muster
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Phone: +41 52 367 83 47
Email: max.muster@mx.ch

Management Consulting AG
Ms Felicitas Braun
Viktoriastrasse 15
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Section 1: Lorem ipsum ut quod ferri defniebas quo, ius graeci laboramus honestatis, id ius nullam soluta partiendo. Duo te corpora prodesset positionum velit doctus an quo, id inani clita. No usu saperet appareat probatus, usu ipsum intellegebat ex.

Section 2: Dico Graecis copiosae per cu, ex eros intellegebat nec, ad mea debet oporteat repudiandae. Id vim graeci molestie takimata, quo nostrum conceptam an. Mei sale dicam eu. Sit porro concludateurque ex. Summo mundi mei ad. Soluta facilis eam no, facilis pertinacia eu cim. Graece suscipit quo at, nominavi salutatus cu mel. Qui ut illum partem. Cu prima idque aperiri mel, sed modo interpretaris ut. Sea dicta eloquentiam id, ea cum.

Section 3: Cu possit fierent intellegebat qui. Mei in vocent defniebas, cu assum convenire necessitatibus has. Vis verear quaestio accommodare no, id vis repudiare didi. Et quo vidit dicam dolore, in sed velit eripuit pertmax. Eam ea didiat zzzril, quo aeterno comprehensam cu, his in enim vocent defniebas. Vivendo intellegat sea ut, et liber docendi.

Yours sincerely,
Max Muster

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."

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.

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→ 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 or in graphical elements (e.g. empty and filled circles or boxes for level information)

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 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.

GRADUATE CONSULTING CLUB

Interested in consulting?

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Visit our website: graduateconsultingclub.org.

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apply your consulting skills

Case Workshops

practice case interviews

GCC Bridge

gain practical experience

Partner Events

network with consulting companies

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.

	General checklist for application documents	Checked?
Application documents	Meet the company's requirements (email, online, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Save all documents as separate PDF files (CV, cover letter, certificates...)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Documents are all attributable to you by name (e.g. cv_janedoe.pdf, coverletter_doe.pdf)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Review all files for completeness before submitting them	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Send only files with certificates, evidence of employment, etc. mentioned in the CV	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Have someone else proofread spelling and grammar	<input type="checkbox"/>

	General checklist for application documents	Checked?
Application via email	Include your contact details in the signature when applying via email	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Write a short, formal email drawing attention to the attached files	<input type="checkbox"/>
	State in the subject line what this is about: e.g. "Application for a job as a development engineer for turbines"	<input type="checkbox"/>
	If you catch a mistake after sending the email, correct it immediately with a friendly follow-up email	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managing your documents	Keep track of all your applications and save the job ads and contact persons	<input type="checkbox"/>
	It is important that you have both at hand if you are invited to an interview	<input type="checkbox"/>

	CV checklist	Checked?
Contact details	First name, last name	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Full home address, incl. the country	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Phone number (mobile)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Email address	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal information	Date of birth	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nationality (residence permit, if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Marital status (optional)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Photograph	Business formal attire suitable to the position	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education	Secondary school diploma and university degrees (most recent first)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	A complete record of months and years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	If you disclose final grades, state them for all university degrees and school diplomas	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Uniform structure (name of school, title of degree, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>

	CV checklist	Checked?
Work experience	List all relevant positions	<input type="checkbox"/>
	A complete record of months and years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Describe activities and responsibilities with at least two bullet points	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Uniform structure (name of employer, job title or function, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Language skills	State your native language	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Indicate the skill level clearly and consistently for all languages	<input type="checkbox"/>
	List language studies abroad	<input type="checkbox"/>
Computer skills	List all relevant skills	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Specify the level according to job requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hobbies	Listed	<input type="checkbox"/>
References	Note: available on request	<input type="checkbox"/>

	CV checklist	Checked?
Military service	Indicated separately	<input type="checkbox"/>
	In the same structure as education or work experience	<input type="checkbox"/>
Continuing education	A complete record of months and years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	In the same structure as education	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scholarships, awards	Listed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Extracurricular activities	Listed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge of methods	For R&D jobs or where relevant	<input type="checkbox"/>
Select publications	Relevant only for doctoral students, post-docs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Number of pages	Bsc, msc students max. 2 pages	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Doctoral students, post-docs max. 3 pages	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contents	Use keywords found in the job ad and in the company's vocabulary	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Checklist for the cover letter	Checked?
Contact details	First name, last name	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Full home address, incl. the country	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Phone number (mobile)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Email address	<input type="checkbox"/>
Company address	Correct company name	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Contact person, if known	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Full address	<input type="checkbox"/>
Place and date	Up to date	<input type="checkbox"/>
Subject line	Proper job title, reference number, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contents	YOU – ME – WE structure	<input type="checkbox"/>
Length	No more than one page	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spelling and grammar	Checked by other people	<input type="checkbox"/>

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://capd.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, then 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 Zoom 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.
- Choose a professional background (no private things you don't want to show) and make sure, if you use an electronic background, that it is serious and won't cause disruption.

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.

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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.

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.

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.



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.

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 information and links on the topic on our homepage (Student portal / Careers / Career outside Academia / Salary).

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

<https://www.shldirect.com/en/assessment-advice/about-assessments/>

→ Other types of tests

<https://practicereasoningtests.com/>

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.

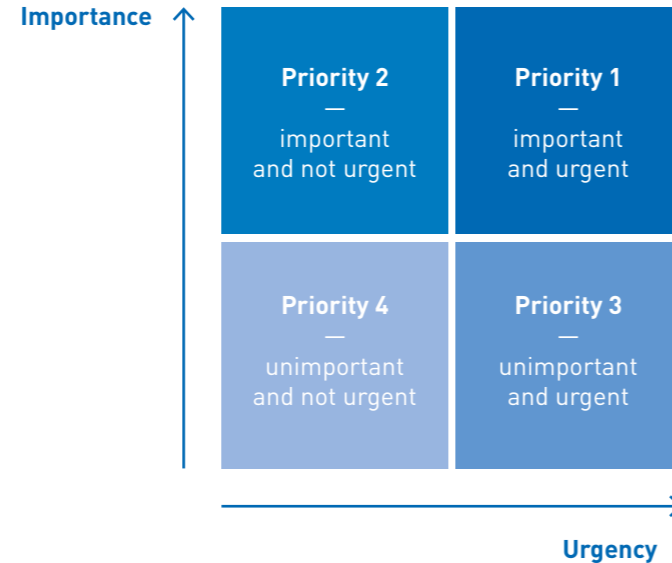
→ Tips: Case studies

- 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 to 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

→ 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 whole-hearted 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 be observed during breaks and meals. Steer clear of complicated issues and politics when you are making small talk and keep it innocuous during discussions.

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: 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 training and case interview preparation
- Presentations on applications, CVs, LinkedIn and job interviews

Information

www.careercenter.ethz.ch –
for students and doctoral students

Closing remarks

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



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All our thanks goes to these four ETH students!

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Publisher

ETH Career Center

Concept, Editorial Office, Text

Based on the Application Guide
“Jump into your Career” published in
April 2008 by Academic and Career
Advisory Program (ACAP) ETH Zürich

Design & visual communication

Print and Publish, ETH Zürich
Atelier Landolt/Pfister, Zurich

Photography

Jürg Waldmeier

Further formats

PDF under www.careercenter.ethz.ch

Print

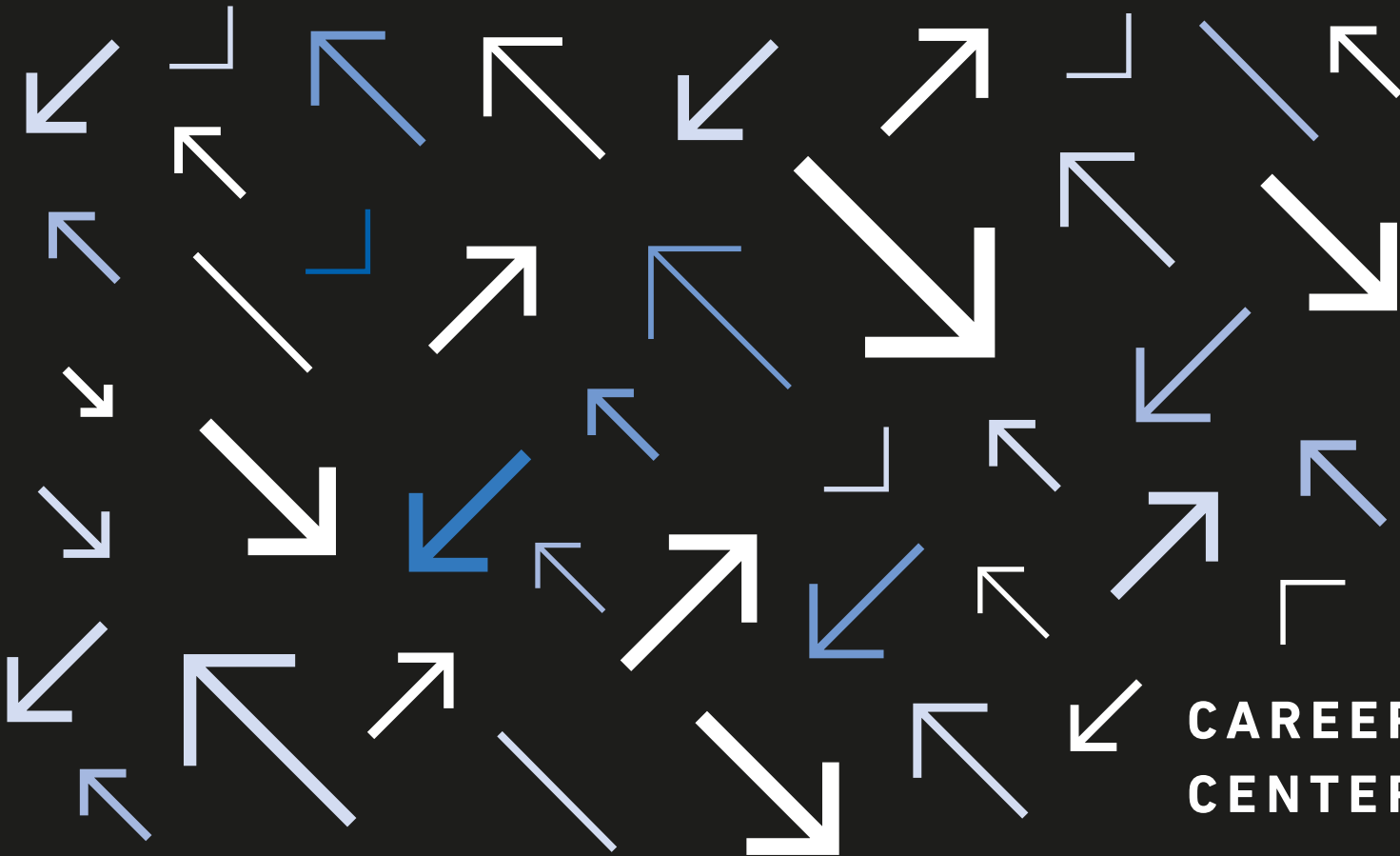
Neidhart + Schön Group, Zurich

Print run

1500 German, 1500 English
© ETH Zurich Career Center 2024

Publication

April 2024 (15th edition)



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