

Application Guide

for ETH students and doctoral students



ANALYSIS
EXPLORATION
FOCUSING
APPLICATION

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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.



ASV



5'6"

BULL



O'NEILL

me

HAWAII

ASV



BULL

How to use this guide

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

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



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

The ETH Career Center

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

Alongside this guide, the Career Center offers comprehensive services for the four stages of the application process. We provide one-on-one 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

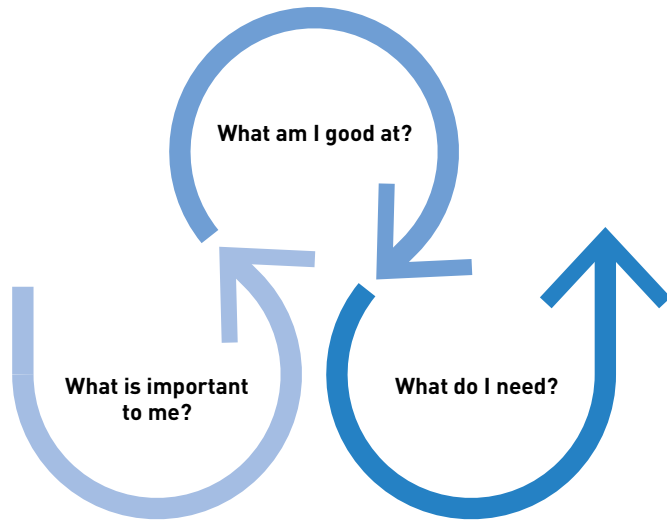
Careful assessment of where you stand is the first step in the application process. It is your launch pad for exploring career options, for focusing on specific sectors and companies, and for the application itself. A rigorous self-analysis will help you focus on organisations and career opportunities 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.

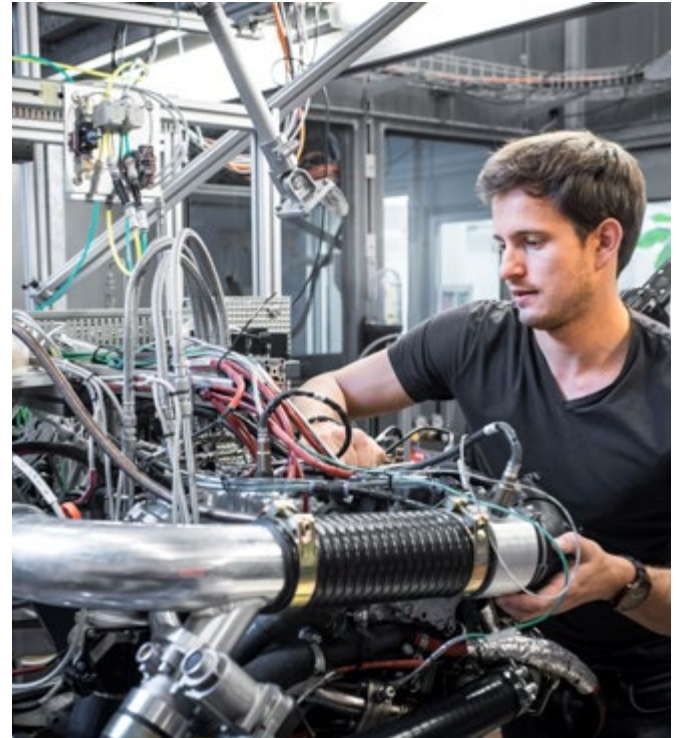


What is important to me?

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	■	■
	Repair a car or a machine	■	■
	Make crafts or sew	■	■
	Build things made of wood, metal, etc.	■	■
	Operate devices or machines	■	■
	Garden or do landscaping	■	■
	Total, focus on things		
Focus on ideas	Decorate a room	■	■
	Write poems or lyrics	■	■
	Publish an article in a blog or magazine	■	■
	Solve a problem	■	■
	Perform in a play	■	■
	Play an instrument	■	■
	Invent a new product	■	■
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.

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 / tranquility 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 fulfillment 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

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?

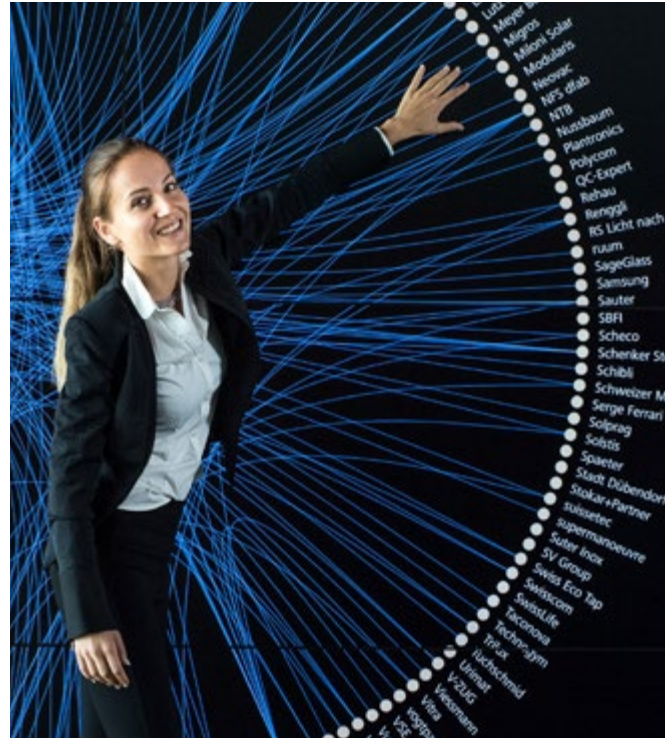
What am I good at?

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

(My assessment agrees with that of others)

Hidden strengths

(Others' assessment was higher than mine)

Blind spots

(My assessment was higher than others')

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.

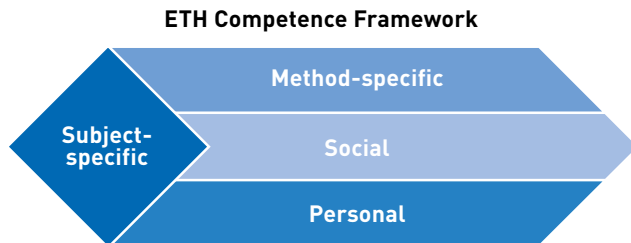
Blind spots – Traits where you ranked yourself higher than others did. Perhaps you are unaware of certain weaknesses in these areas and therefore tend to play down their importance or avoid opportunities to develop these qualities. Do not be upset if you have blind spots – we all have them! The important 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.



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 *Focus-ing* → *Job advertisement*).

My technical skills acquired at ETH or other schools

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

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
<i>e.g. internship at Appway</i>	<i>e.g. using PowerPoint for company presentations</i>	<i>e.g. using C++</i>

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

(My assessment agrees with that of others)

Hidden strengths

(Others' assessment was higher than mine)

Blind spots

(My assessment was higher than others')

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
	<p data-bbox="204 341 293 364">Situation</p> <p data-bbox="204 427 255 450">Task</p> <p data-bbox="204 514 280 536">Activity</p> <p data-bbox="204 600 280 622">Results</p>
	<p data-bbox="204 677 293 700">Situation</p> <p data-bbox="204 763 255 786">Task</p> <p data-bbox="204 850 280 872">Activity</p> <p data-bbox="204 936 280 958">Results</p>

Competency/ Skill	Example of how I put it to use
	<p data-bbox="904 341 994 364">Situation</p> <p data-bbox="904 427 957 450">Task</p> <p data-bbox="904 514 981 536">Activity</p> <p data-bbox="904 600 981 622">Results</p>
	<p data-bbox="904 677 994 700">Situation</p> <p data-bbox="904 763 957 786">Task</p> <p data-bbox="904 850 981 872">Activity</p> <p data-bbox="904 936 981 958">Results</p>



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)?

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

Reflections:

Compromises

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

Source: *Your Complete Job Search Guide, Emploi Québec*;
http://www.emploiquebec.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/fichiers/pdf/Publications/00_Bien-se-connaître.pdf

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

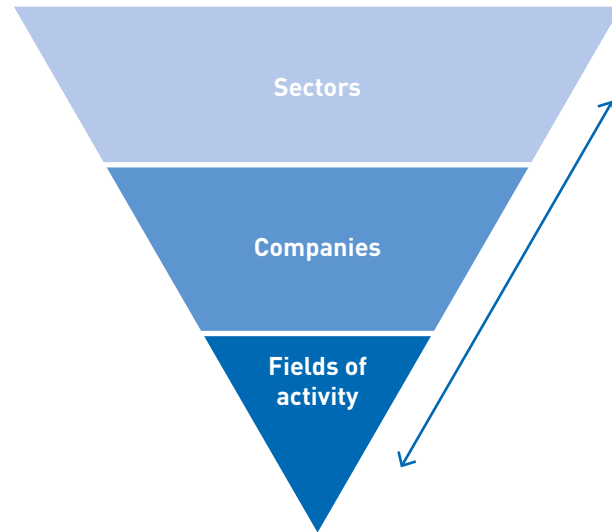
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My job market

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	■	■	■
Architectural services	■	■	■
Automotive	■	■	■
Banking, finance, insurance	■	■	■
Biomechanics, biotechnology	■	■	■
Biomedical industry	■	■	■
Chemical and process engineering	■	■	■
Computer and information sciences	■	■	■
Construction	■	■	■
Consulting	■	■	■
Consumer goods	■	■	■
Drive and control technology	■	■	■
Electronics and consumer electronics	■	■	■
Engineering, planning and surveying	■	■	■
Extractive industry	■	■	■
Fertilizer, feed, and crop protection industry	■	■	■

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

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

APP

Axpo

BCG

Bundesverwaltung

Carbogen Amcis

CKW

Helbling Technik

Leica Geosystems

Losinger Marazzi

Novartis

Oepfelbaum

Roche

Rolex

Siemens

Swiss Re

Tiefbauamt der Stadt Zürich

Vontobel

Simon Fuchs, 29

MSc ETH in Electrical Engineering and Information Technology

Electrical Engineer Power Electronics at **ABB Switzerland**

How did you find your job?

I found the job description online and submitted my application on the ABB career website (careers.abb).

What influenced your decision to join ABB?

ABB offers a dynamic and technically exciting environment. The culture places great value on the personal development of individual employees. The project-driven structure offers great variety, as different activities must be carried out depending on the phase.

What does a typical working day at ABB look like?

Depending on the project phase, different tasks need to be completed. These tasks could include design of traction and auxiliary systems (energy storage and power converters); various alignment and communication meetings; development of specifications and system concepts; preparation of documentation and implementation tests. In addition to project work, there are also overarching specialist groups that drive forward improvements and guidelines in their particular area.

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

ABB Switzerland has an open communication culture, and you work in interdisciplinary project-specific teams that are reassembled from project to project. This means that you constantly meet new people and expand your network. Your own role in these projects offers a lot of freedom and responsibility to have a direct impact on the final product.

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

It is worthwhile to gain experience while completing your studies. Seek out internships and company visits. Be courageous and apply, even if you don't meet all the experience requirements in the job description.



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

#MyABBstory

ABB

Gesara Bimashofer, 29

Dr. sc. ETH in Chemie

Consultant bei **APP Unternehmensberatung AG****Wie haben Sie Ihre Stelle gefunden?**

Ich habe mir verschiedene Websites von Unternehmensberatungen angesehen. Die von der APP ist mir besonders aufgefallen, weil hier nicht nur Einstiegsmöglichkeiten, sondern auch unterschiedlichste Kunden-Projekte der APP vorgestellt wurden. Als Doktorandin der Chemie erhielt ich so einen super Einblick in den Beratenden-Alltag. Diese Transparenz und die guten Einstiegsmöglichkeiten haben mich dazu bewegt, mich zu bewerben.

Warum haben Sie sich für APP entschieden?

Der Job-Inhalt und die Anstellungsbedingungen haben mich überzeugt. Der Bewerbungsprozess war von Anfang bis Ende transparent und angenehm. Die Projekte sind spannend und eine gute Work-Life-Balance wird bei der APP wirklich gelebt.

Wie sieht Ihr Arbeitsalltag bei APP aus?

Das Gute ist ja – es gibt hier nie einen «Alltag», da man in verschiedenen Projekten bei unterschiedlichen Kunden mitarbeitet. Das macht das Ganze spannend und abwechslungsreich. Ich leite Meetings und Workshops, erarbeite Konzepte sowie Studien und konzipiere Lösungen, welche

dann zusammen mit dem Kunden umgesetzt werden. Dabei kann ich vor Ort bei Kunden, in einem der APP Büros oder im Homeoffice arbeiten.

Was schätzen Sie besonders an Ihrer Tätigkeit bei APP?

Hier werde ich gefördert und gefordert. Mit der Vielfalt an Projekten und Kunden kann ich ständig Neues dazu lernen und meinen Horizont erweitern. Auch im Austausch mit meinen APP-Kolleg:innen. Weil wir aus sehr vielen verschiedenen Studienrichtungen kommen, erhalte ich die unterschiedlichsten Inputs, das ist enorm bereichernd.

Was empfehlen Sie Studierenden für ihren Karriereestieg?

Überlege dir, was du gut kannst – abgesehen vom Fachlichen. Im Studium haben wir bereits bewiesen, dass wir uns jegliches Fachwissen aneignen können. Im Arbeitsalltag sind aber auch methodische und soziale Kompetenzen gefragt.

Meistere Herausforderungen

*Nach dem Einstieg als Junior Consultant
übernimmst du schrittweise mehr
Verantwortung in unseren Projekten
und Dienstleistungen sowie in der
selbstständigen Kundenbetreuung.*

app.ch/karriere



APP Unternehmensberatung AG



Philipp Hilsheimer, 25

MSc ETH in Energy Science and Technology

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

I was already familiar with Axpo from the Power Markets lecture at ETH, and I looked up entry-level opportunities on the website. I was later shown the trainee positions at Axpo on LinkedIn.

What influenced your decision to join Axpo?

I would like to work in the energy sector and promote the energy transition in Europe. Axpo is a great address for me: it has a strong international position and has great ambitions for the energy transition, e.g. in the battery, PV and trading sectors.

What does a typical working day at Axpo look like?

As a trainee, I work in 3 different roles and teams in 18 months, giving me a wide variety of work days. During my first rotation, I mainly worked as a business developer. Here everything revolves around market developments, new ideas and meetings - these, as well as their preparation and follow-up, also dictate the daily routine. Currently, I am optimizing the operation of battery storage systems as a quantitative analyst. Here, I usually concentrate for several days on analyzing and developing a feature and then discuss this

with my colleagues. In between, there is always time to learn relevant new skills.

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

What I like about my trainee position is that I can try new things and learn a lot. I also appreciate the pleasant and open corporate culture and the fact that my work effectively promotes the energy revolution.

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

Inform yourself well about possible occupational fields: Which jobs do you find exciting? And how do they fit your skillset? Contacting people who work in these fields can help you assess the mood in the team, company and industry, know the trends and jargon of the industry, and find various entry-level opportunities.

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, 27

MSc ETH Molekulare Gesundheitswissenschaften

Associate at **BCG Zurich** (Switzerland)

How did you find your job?

During my Master studies I joined the student association ETH Juniors. There, I got the chance to participate in different workshops and recruiting events, where I learned about consulting at BCG, met several people from BCG, and got to know what real casework means. Afterwards, I was convinced and decided to apply for a full-time position at BCG after my studies.

What influenced your decision to join BCG?

The exciting work that I would be doing and the amazing group of people with an open mindset.

What does a typical working day at BGC look like?

My day starts with a big cup of coffee in the office after a short walk from my home. Then, I check my emails and take care of any urgent matters before we have our client meetings, sessions, and workshops. I will try to schedule some catch-ups with mentors/friends to discuss crucial topics to make sure not to lose connectivity with people in the office. Afterwards, we will do some team sports and/or have some exciting team dinners together or events in the office.

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

Firstly: the variety of topics that I can gain experience on and the steep learning curve. My job gives me the opportunity to explore different industries in a short time and tackle multi-faced challenged problems with pressing needs. Secondly: working with incredible motivated, engaging, and talented people. All of them have a diverse background, which help me grow and learn continuously throughout my journey. Besides work we have office events from various initiatives such as Women@BCG, sports groups, or the Climate & Sustainability group.

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

If you are not sure about the direction and if consulting is the right job - just try it out – either through an internship or after your graduation. You will not know if you like it or not if you haven't tried it. Be open-minded and try out new experiences.



Beyond is
where we begin.



Beyond curious.

After finishing her master's degree in Molecular Health Science, Patricia started as an Associate at BCG in Zurich.

She has since worked on several projects in transformation and growth strategy within Health Care, but also in Financial Services.

What she likes most is that she can have tangible impact on business, in health care topics and across several disciplines, but also working on topics outside of her range of studies.



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>

Monica Ratte, 34

MSc ETH Mathematics, Minor ETH Information Security

Head of ICT Security Specifications and Advice,

Deputy Head Federal ICT Security for the **National Cyber Security Center NCSC**

How did you find your job?

I found my first job on the Federal Administration's job portal on the internet. For my current position, I was approached by my now colleagues who I had worked with on joint projects.

What influenced your decision to join the NCSC?

I was looking for a job that reflects the diversity of cyber security. I am a generally curious person and find it exciting to learn something new every day. As an employee of the Federal Administration, I work for Switzerland as a whole and this reflects my personal values. I also appreciate that we all communicate and work in different languages. I remain a highly motivated worker as I have been able to develop myself and my skill set within the Federal Administration. Also, I could (and still can) work on different and versatile projects and, after operational technical tasks, was entrusted with a leadership position.

What does a typical working day the NCSC look like?

I lead a team of six cyber security experts who develop technical specifications for the entire Federal Administration. In

my role, I decide what direction our approach should take and I critically assess what my team has developed to ensure that our products comply with our high-quality standards.

What in particular do you like about your job at the NCSC?

I appreciate the variety of tasks and interactions. On the one side, we conduct in-depth technical discussions and, on the other side, we must be able to write easily understandable decision-making texts. Part of my leadership tasks also include dealing with the organisational development of the NCSC as well as managing people.

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

Your work must be motivating. Do not be afraid of lacking certain knowledge: everything can be learned. However, you must be willing to continuously develop yourself and broaden your skill set because in IT everything evolves at a very high pace.

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



I fight cyber attacks.
I'm working
for Switzerland.

Monica
IT Security Officer
Mathematics

stelle.admin.ch



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Federal Administration

Working for Switzerland

Patrick Wilhelm, 38

Dr. sc. ETH in Chemie

Project Manager Commercial Products at **CARBOGEN AMCIS****How did you find your job?**

During my first job in the industry as a group leader in research and development, I came into contact with job profiles that I had not yet known. I found the role of project manager, where all project strands come together and are coordinated, particularly exciting. After further training to become a Project Management Professional (PMP), I came across the advertisement for my current job through an online search.

Why did you decide to take a job at CARBOGEN AMCIS?

As a medium-sized company, CARBOGEN AMCIS is located in the Life Science Cluster Basel, which was important to me in the early application process. I found the application process, from the submission of the documents to the on-site interview, to be pleasant, uncomplicated and professional. The good impression was also reflected in the high standard of equipment and the motivated employees on site. The job description corresponded to my ideas, so that the decision for CARBOGEN AMCIS was easy for me.

What does your typical work day at CARBOGEN AMCIS look like?

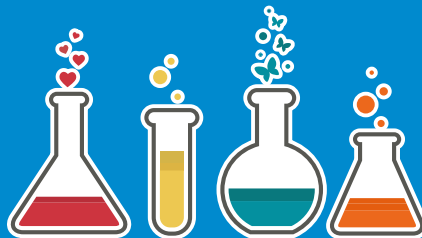
As a project manager, I coordinate the ongoing manufacturing campaign with the project team, deal with questions regarding official regulations, ensuring the quality of medicinal products and prepare offers and invoices for the services provided.

What's the best thing about your work at CARBOGEN AMCIS?

What I like about my job is that I am the link between the customer and all internal contact groups. This brings me into contact with all facets of pharmaceutical manufacturing, which is very exciting and challenging. I really like this in combination with the open, challenging and trust-based corporate culture.

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

The acquired scientific way of thinking can also be used outside of the subject area. Show openness towards previously unknown occupational profiles.



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BRING YOUR FUTURE TO LIFE

David Lehnen, 33

MSc ETH in Electrical Engineering and Information Technology

Expert grid planning at **CKW**

How did you find your job?

At the end of my studies at ETH Zurich, I wrote my master's thesis at Axpo, which is the parent company of CKW. After graduating, I joined Axpo as a grid planner before moving to CKW two years ago.

What influenced your decision to join CKW?

Switzerland's future is in the middle of change. The ongoing technical and energy policy changes towards a sustainable future involve challenging issues. CKW has ambitious goals with regard to the expansion of photovoltaics in Switzerland and covers the entire spectrum from low to high voltage on the grid side.

What does a typical working day at CKW look like?

My main task as a grid planner is to find the optimal grid elements for the next 50 years using suitable scenarios for electricity consumption development. We are receiving help by a grid simulation software, which we can automate via a programming interface. However, my work does not only take place in front of the computer: Meetings with subscrib-

ers or exchanges with other grid operators in working groups or technical events make the work varied.

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

I very much appreciate the variety I mentioned and the freedom to organize my working hours. In addition, as a grid technology specialist, we are confronted with exciting and challenging questions. Furthermore, as part of the Axpo Group, CKW offers many development opportunities.

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

An internship, a trainee program or, as in my case, writing a master's thesis at a company offers the opportunity to get a taste of practical experience and often also the possibility for an entry-level position. For the search for internships or master's theses, I recommend contacting companies directly.



Marion
Business Intelligence
Engineer

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

#jazumorgen

ckw.ch/karriere

CKW.

Ramon Flammer, 27

MSc ETH Mechanical Engineering

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

I first got in touch with Helbling Technik during my industrial internship. At the end of my studies, I then applied by submitting a spontaneous application.

Why did you decide to join Helbling Technik?

The determining factor was the vast diversity of activities resulting from working on various development projects in collaboration with different customers. I also very much appreciated the flat hierarchy levels and the opportunity to take on responsibility in customer projects early on in my professional career.

What does your working day at Helbling Technik look like?

Due to the great amount of variety, there is actually no such thing as a “typical” working day. Depending on the customer and the project goals, products or technologies are accompanied in single or multiple phases from the concept search to series production. As a Project Engineer in the field of mechanics, I can make a valuable contribution in all project phases and can directly apply the broad ETH knowl-

edge (from mechanics to thermo & fluid dynamics and to control systems).

What do you particularly appreciate about your work at Helbling Technik?

Working with clients that cover the entire spectrum from emerging startups to market-leading technology corporations requires a high degree of flexibility and adaptability, which in turn is compensated by unbeatable diversity. I am supported, challenged and fostered both in the daily exchange with my working colleagues and through a wide range of training opportunities.

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

Choose the job according to your own interests and score with soft skills.

Success through innovation: breaking new ground in your career

A good idea is just the starting point. To become innovations, ideas need to be professionally implemented. We like to roll our sleeves up and get to grips with our customers' challenges, finding new ways of looking at existing solutions. Frequently, this requires courage – as well as technical expertise, grounded creativity and the right touch. Leading businesses from a wide range of different sectors have entrusted us with their innovation projects for years. So our team is constantly growing.

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Luca Varano, 25

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.

Committed, dynamic and with a passion for an autonomous future, we revolutionize the digital world –in real-time.

Leica Geosystems part of Hexagon is a global leader in sensor, software and autonomous solutions. We are putting data to work to boost efficiency, productivity, and quality across industrial, manufacturing, infrastructure, safety, and mobility applications.

Our technologies are shaping urban and production ecosystems to become increasingly connected and autonomous — ensuring a scalable, sustainable future.

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!



Lennart Rogenhofer, 28

BSC und MSc in Maschineningenieurwissenschaften

Chief Climate Officer at **Losinger Marazzi**

How did you find your job?

After my master thesis at the Future Cities Laboratory, a few of my contacts at the EMPA recommended to get in touch with Losinger Marazzi. During the recruitment process, my actual position did not exist yet - therefore we agreed on an internship to begin within the company. During the internship it became clear that it will become a permanent position.

Why did you decide to take a job at Losinger Marazzi?

During my studies I've focused myself on renewable energy and I made it my goal to work in this area after my studies. It became clear during the recruitment process that Losinger Marazzi won't only offer a position to fill but one with space to help create the position and its tasks / responsibilities. This wasn't just a feeling I had - today I am the "Chief Climate Officer", a newly created position which focuses on the climate strategy of the company.

What does your typical work day at Losinger Marazzi look like?

I do not have a typical working day - client meetings, internal trainings, data analytics and the development of new tools are part of my daily work. The one and only constant

existing in my daily business is the topic of the climate strategy of Losinger Marazzi, the center of focus of my position. It is not only about the emissions we are having as a company, but also our indirect emissions (Scope 3). I am allowed to support our project teams in the definition and achievement of appealing CO₂-goals.

What's the best thing about your work at Losinger Marazzi?

It has been of great importance to me that I was given a lot of trust as well as responsibility. Today, I have a lot of freedom in my job, and I am convinced that I am doing something worthy and good for the reduction of CO₂ emissions. I am impressed by the effort and conviction Losinger Marazzi is showing.

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

I am convinced that it's essential to get to know the future work colleagues and the management, e.g., bosses. Those people are going to shape your daily work life, especially at the beginning, plus they have a lot of knowledge and experience to share.

#CreatingSustainableValue

PROGRESSIV DENKEN, NACHHALTIG HANDELN. DAS IST MÖGLICH.

Wenn Sorgsamkeit zur Kompetenz wird.

Wer für eine funktionierende Welt von morgen Lebensräume konzipiert, gestaltet und realisiert, braucht ein Höchstmass an Innovationskraft: Der Raum wird knapper, macht die Verdichtung zur Notwendigkeit, und jede einzelne Ressource ist kostbarer denn je. Darum setzen wir bei Losinger Marazzi kompromisslos auf Nachhaltigkeit. Projekte wie die Wohnsiedlungen Weidmatt (Bild) in Lausen (BL) und Schönenbrunnen in Belp (BE) beweisen unsere Kompetenz im Holzbau, die wir fortan mit dem Einsatz des Holz-Hybrid-Systems von CREE Buildings zusätzlich ergänzen und stärken.

Mehr Infos: losinger-marazzi.ch

LOSINGER
MARAZZI

Shared innovation



Aya Ashour, 31

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.

Novartis



Changing the practice of medicine

At Novartis, we harness the innovation power of science to address some of society's most challenging healthcare issues.

We are passionate about discovering new ways to improve and extend people's lives.



Fabian Stutz, 31

MSc in Computer Science ETH

Consultant für Software Engineering & Architecture bei **Oepfelbaum IT Management AG**

Wie hast du deine Stelle gefunden?

Die IT im Banking und die Entwicklung von Webapplikationen faszinierten mich, zudem hat mir ein Bekannter viel Positives vom Oepfelbaum erzählt. Das Professionelle, Familiäre und Bodenständige sprachen mich sofort an. Da Oepfelbaum immer offen für neue Talente ist, konnte ich nach der Bewerbung als Software Engineer starten.

Warum hast du dich für Oepfelbaum IT Management AG entschieden?

Ich wünschte mir einen sinnvollen Job, in dem ich etwas bewirken, verschiedene Firmen und Projekte kennenlernen und mich weiterentwickeln kann. Oepfelbaum bietet auf vielseitige Weise Zugang dazu. Auch die Kolleg:innen und Mentor:innen, die tolle Vernetzung und der unterstützende Teamspirit haben mich überzeugt. So konnte ich das Gelernte aus dem Studium nicht nur einsetzen, sondern gezielt erweitern.

Wie sieht dein Arbeitsalltag bei Oepfelbaum IT Management AG aus?

Bunt! Im Projekt wirke ich als Schnittstelle zwischen Entwicklung und Business. Auch bin ich im regelmässigen Austausch

mit meinem Team im Oepfelbaum. Mein Tag teilt sich auf zwischen viel Hands-on programmieren, planen, konzipieren und beraten – auch der Kaffee dazwischen muss sein. Und dies immer in freundschaftlicher und respektvoller Atmosphäre.

Was schätzt du besonders an deiner Tätigkeit bei Oepfelbaum IT Management AG?

Das tägliche Lernen und Erweitern meines spannenden Netzwerks. Der Umgang ist immer auf Augenhöhe und man wächst gemeinsam. Aktuell absolviere ich mit Unterstützung vom Oepfelbaum einen MAS in Management, Technology & Economics an der ETH. Unsere Apéros und Teamessen sind top. Die Ski- und Wanderweekends legendär. 2024 reisen wir zusammen nach Finnisch Lapland zu den Nordlichtern. Die Werte vom Oepfelbaum sind grandios und werden von allen gelebt.

Was empfehlst du Studierenden für ihren Karriereestieg?

An Messen gehen und neue Firmen kennenlernen. Offen und mutig sein. Das Tempo aus dem Studium mitnehmen, damit ist das Weiterkommen vorprogrammiert. Auf den Bauch hören – und sich natürlich beim Oepfelbaum bewerben.

BANKING. TECH. SCHWEIZ

oepfelbaum
BANKING TECHNOLOGY EXPERTS



Im Oepfelbaum
kannst du vom
ersten Tag an
aktiv mitmischen.

← **Fabian Stutz**
Software Engineer
Freizeitmixologist
Oepfelbäumler



Jonas Dorn, 45

Dipl Ing ETH Materials Sciences

Digital Biomarker Technology Lead at **Roche**

How did you find your job?

I had been working on digital biomarkers, i.e. how to quantify disease and disability in patients' everyday life using digital devices, for several years when a Roche recruiter reached out to me via LinkedIn and asked whether I would be open to a new challenge.

What influenced your decision to join Roche?

Roche is investing significantly into their digital capabilities, which allows me to work on projects at a scale and a level of impact that is not possible in many other places. Furthermore, I had met several future colleagues at conferences and knew them as smart and kind people, and I knew from their publications that they were doing top-notch research.

What does a typical working day at Roche look like?

Being responsible for digital biomarker activities within a disease area, I am the interface between our group and the clinical teams developing new therapies. A majority of my day is thus spent in meetings, with topics ranging from test design over resource planning, interactions with health au-

thorities, and negotiating collaborations to data analysis, and in general ensuring that my team has everything they need to succeed.

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

Digital Biomarkers is still a rather new field, and thus, almost everything we do is a bold step into the unknown. I love discovering uncharted territory together with a team of smart and passionate people, the diversity of challenges that every day brings, and to have the opportunity to change how we as an industry quantify the impact of disease and disability to enable the development of even better therapies for patients.

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

Step out of your comfort zone to accumulate a variety of experiences in different settings. This will give you a broad network of contacts, and an appreciation of which kind of environment, which kind of culture, and which kind of challenges allow you to thrive.



Be brave. Push boundaries.

Change the future of healthcare together with us.

At Roche, we are working towards one goal: solving some of the greatest challenges for humanity using science and technology. Every day, our work impacts the lives of millions of patients all around the world. Sounds thrilling and you are interested in seeing more?



careers.roche.com/global/en

By challenging conventional thinking and our wild curiosity, we have become one of the world's leading research-focused healthcare companies. This would not be possible without brilliant students/PhDs/postdocs or recent graduates with a passion for:

- Natural Sciences/Life Sciences
- Digital Sciences
- Computer Sciences/IT
- Engineering
- Business

Be brave, take matters into your own hands. Apply at Roche for internships, trainee/fellowship programmes or entry-level positions. These development opportunities give you the chance to grow and make a difference to patients.

You own your career. The next step is yours! **genext.roche.com**



Valérie Flück, 43

Dipl. Ing. ETH in Materials Science

R&D Engineer at **ROLEX**

How did you find your job?

After completing my degree at ETHZ, I spent a few months as an intern in the aerospace industry. I had specialized in composite materials – ceramics and biocompatible polymers. In early 2004, a friend told me that a Rolex laboratory was looking for a materials engineer.

What influenced your decision to join Rolex?

I was not familiar with the watchmaking industry, but when I visited the brand's laboratories, I realized that the environment was exactly what I was looking for. I was impressed by all of the analysis equipment available – it was a real material engineer's paradise!

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

I like having access in-house to cutting-edge analysis methods and working with the people that specialize in them. I am also lucky to be able to continue to learn and to work with people from different backgrounds and with a wide range of experience, such as academics, engineers, technicians and watchmaking operators. At Rolex, we are able to follow projects, from researching theoretical solutions to putting in place a real production line. In 17 years, I have never been bored.

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

I would advise students not to focus on one field. Personally, I realized that what I enjoyed the most was my job as an engineer on the whole. I would also recommend doing one or more internships with companies – they enable you to build up professional experience. In addition, they can sometimes lead to a permanent position.

www.carrieres-rolex.com



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#Perpetual



OYSTER PERPETUAL MILGAUSS

Bettina Maurer, 24

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.



Create a better #TomorrowWithUs in Switzerland and around the world

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

SIEMENS

Alisha Esshaki, 26

MA Comparative and International Studies

Sustainability Associate at **Swiss Re****How did you find your job?**

I took part in a virtual information session organised by Swiss Re. They gave an excellent pitch: an 18-month graduate programme in which an international rotation is possible.

What influenced your decision to join Swiss Re?

I wanted to work for a company whose values on sustainability I could share. At Swiss Re, climate change is high on the agenda because it is one factor that impacts insured losses. Swiss Re also navigates a complex value chain: it aims to decarbonise operations, investments and underwriting. The people at Swiss Re are also extraordinary. The company houses scientists of all disciplines – our CEO has an ETH PhD in Physics, and there are teams dedicated to researching natural catastrophe, cyber and economic trends.

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

We have “hybrid” team meetings where some colleagues are in the office and others dial in (at home or in a different country). Lunches are eaten at the staff restaurant. It’s common to invite a colleague to lunch who you have never spoken to before, but who you would like to get to know because their

job sounds interesting. I am currently working on the sustainability report, where I engage with different teams to gather, prioritise, and edit information on sustainability. I also work on ad-hoc projects, such as materiality assessments, the group sustainability strategy or stakeholder engagement strategies.

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

“Own the way you work” means it’s possible to organise your work schedule. Beyond this, staff at Swiss Re Switzerland have an average tenure of over nine years. I think this is because employees who want to explore different areas of the business are encouraged to do so.

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

Choose a graduate scheme which offers rotations or an internship. It allows you to get to know the company (and the people in it) and to formulate a long-term career path.



Your time is now.

Our vision at Swiss Re is to ensure our employees find meaning in their work and have a deep sense of purpose matched with an attractive, flexible, equitable and inclusive work environment.

David Tolar, 30

MSc ETH Raumentwicklung und Infrastruktursysteme

Trainee beim **Tiefbauamt der Stadt Zürich**

Wie haben Sie Ihre Stelle gefunden?

Ich wurde schon während des Studiums durch die jährliche Info-Veranstaltung auf das Trainee-Programm beim Tiefbauamt der Stadt Zürich aufmerksam. Die Aufgaben eines Trainees und der Aufbau des Programms klangen für mich sehr spannend. Durch den Einblick in die laufenden Projekte hat sich der gute Eindruck während der Veranstaltung bestätigt, sodass ich mich nach meinem Masterstudium für diese Stelle beworben habe.

Warum haben Sie sich für das Tiefbauamt entschieden?

Die Möglichkeit die Zukunft der Stadt Zürich mitzugestalten und Zusammenhänge an mir bekannten Orten in der Stadt zu verstehen, fand ich sehr attraktiv. Zudem ermöglicht das Trainee-Programm einen sehr guten Einstieg in das Berufsleben und zwar besonders für Personen, die einen Einblick in verschiedene Disziplinen erhalten möchten.

Wie sieht Ihr Arbeitsalltag beim Tiefbauamt aus?

Je nach Geschäftsbereich und Projekt sind die täglichen Aufgaben unterschiedlich. Dadurch ist die Arbeit sehr abwechslungsreich. Man hört dabei nie auf zu lernen, da auf

einen laufend neue Situationen und Fragestellungen zukommen.

Was schätzen Sie besonders an Ihrer Tätigkeit beim Tiefbauamt?

Durch meine Stelle als Trainee bekam ich in kürzester Zeit einen grossen Überblick über die Vorgänge bei der Planung von Bauprojekten und in der städtischen Verwaltung. Dabei kann ich in verschiedenen Disziplinen Fuss fassen und die Rolle als Raumplaner, Ingenieur oder Gesamtprojektleiter aktiv ausprobieren und erlernen.

Was empfehlen Sie Studierenden für ihren Karriereestieg?

Es ist nach dem Studium manchmal schwierig zu wissen, in welche Richtung die Karriere gehen soll. Dabei ist es wichtig Erfahrungen zu sammeln und möglichst viel Verschiedenes auszuprobieren um herauszufinden, wofür das Herz schlägt. Dafür ist die Stelle als Trainee eine sehr gute Wahl.

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

Yasmin Rosskopf, 31

MSc ETH in Environmental Sciences

Trainee Fullstack Software Engineer at **Vontobel****How did you find your job?**

I was considering switching to a career in software development for some time. To achieve this, I regularly programmed in my free time and attended a CAS. My job search focused on a trainee position because of my level of knowledge and the opportunity to gain a broad insight into the industry.

What influenced your decision to join Vontobel?

During my preparations, Vontobel's Digital Hub stood out as innovative and dynamic. My contacts during the application phase were friendly and created an engaging atmosphere. Furthermore, Vontobel is known in the industry as a great employer. All this made the decision easy for me. After a year I can tell that it was one of the best decisions I've made. The people are great, the projects are interesting and I really enjoy working here.

What does a typical working day at Vontobel look like?

Everyday brings new opportunities to take ownership and make an impact in the team. I work on my own but also in collaboration with others in- and outside of the department. We certainly are programming a lot. But we also meet up for

short daily standups to realign our priorities or share knowledge in longer pair-programming sessions. It's a motivating environment where I feel I am learning lots and contributing to the company.

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

The work is interesting and multifaceted, and it is fun to develop the digital platforms together with highly motivated people. One of the many advantages of being a trainee is the regular interaction with other trainees, which gives you exciting insights into other departments.

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

Be open to new opportunities and challenges. Get curious, ask questions and learn from others. Don't be discouraged by rejections, but see them as an opportunity to practice.



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vontobel.com/gtp**

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 Association of the ETH Zurich
- 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 Springsemester

 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**

v **eth**



polymesse.ch

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.sviaf.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 Werdli
 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

H Marketing and Funding Assistant
 Swim for Cancer
 Oct 2013 1 mo
 Health
 – advertisement design: poster, flyer, 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.

The screenshot shows the 'Accomplishments' section of a LinkedIn profile. It is divided into two main areas: 'Languages' and 'Project'. The 'Languages' section lists German (Native or bilingual proficiency), English (Full professional proficiency), Spanish (Professional working proficiency), and Chinese (Elementary proficiency). The 'Project' section lists 'Young Projekt Switzerland' with details: 'leading a mini-company with 4 project members' and 'development, production and selling of handmade bags', dated from Sep 2009 to Feb 2010. Below the project is a 'Teammates' section with a person icon. A callout '4' points to the 'Languages' section, and a callout '1' points to the 'Project' section. Below the accomplishments is the 'Following' section, which displays four followed entities: Liumnus (85,202 followers), ETH Zurich (70,091 followers), Medphabi (218,138 followers), and Pulse (1,460,563 followers). At the bottom of the page, the LinkedIn logo and navigation links are visible.

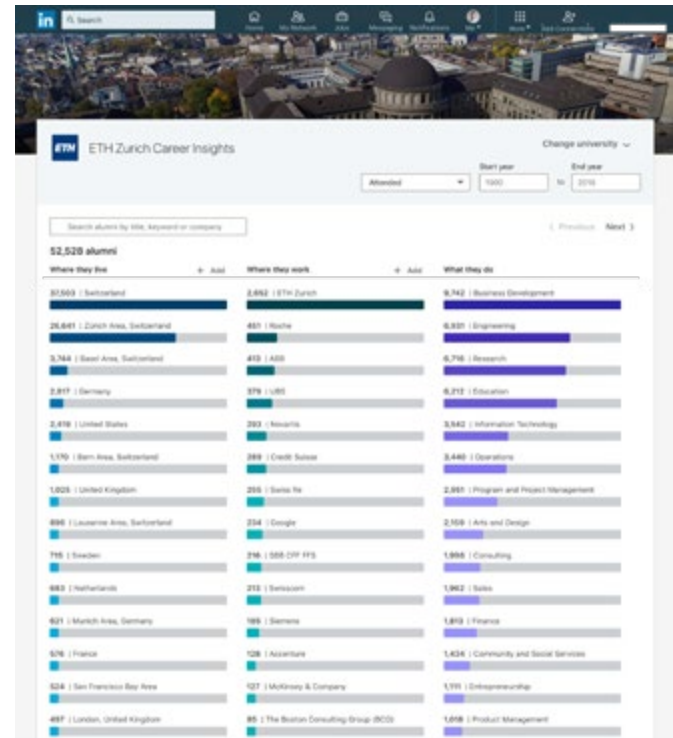
NB:

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

ETH networks on LinkedIn

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

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



Summary

The building blocks for focusing

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

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

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

Sector	Companies	Fields of activity

My most important requirements for a future employer		

→ Tips: Exploration

- Reach out to everyone who can help and tap their knowledge. Talk to your professors and ETH alumni at fairs and career events to learn more about various sectors, companies and career paths.
- Take the time to dig deep and often, researching websites, online networks such as LinkedIn, and trade journals in your preferred fields.
- Compare the information you gathered in this chapter *Exploration* with the insights you gained in the *Analysis* chapter to make sure that your chosen sectors, companies and job profiles really do match your personality, skills and values.
- Stay flexible in your choice of industries and employers to keep your options open, regardless of what state the economy happens to be in.

→ ETH Career Center offering: Exploration

- Individual sessions to determine sectors and fields of activity
- Annual Career Weeks in March and October: Various career events with companies to provide insights into various job profiles and establish contacts with company representatives
- Panel discussions
- Events and workshops on specific career topics

Information

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



Career?

We accompany you! Your ETH Alumni

www.alumni.ethz.ch/career-services



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:



IAESTE
SWITZERLAND



3 — FOCUSING

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Job search

Strategies and techniques

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

Company websites

Most companies post job vacancies on their corporate website. HR does not want to be swamped with applications, so these vacancies are often not published on other job platforms. Review the websites of companies you would like to work for and look for jobs that fit your profile. If you do not find any suitable listings, you can try submitting a spontaneous application on the off-chance that something is available (see the section [Focusing](#) → [Proactive job search](#)).



Job platforms

Companies post job offers on all kinds of internet platforms. Always check to make sure these job offers are current. Use any of the many support tools available to set up a search assistant or post your CV online.

General job portals

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

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.jobeye.ch, 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.

ETH zürich

ETH Career Center
for your career design

www.careercenter.ethz.ch

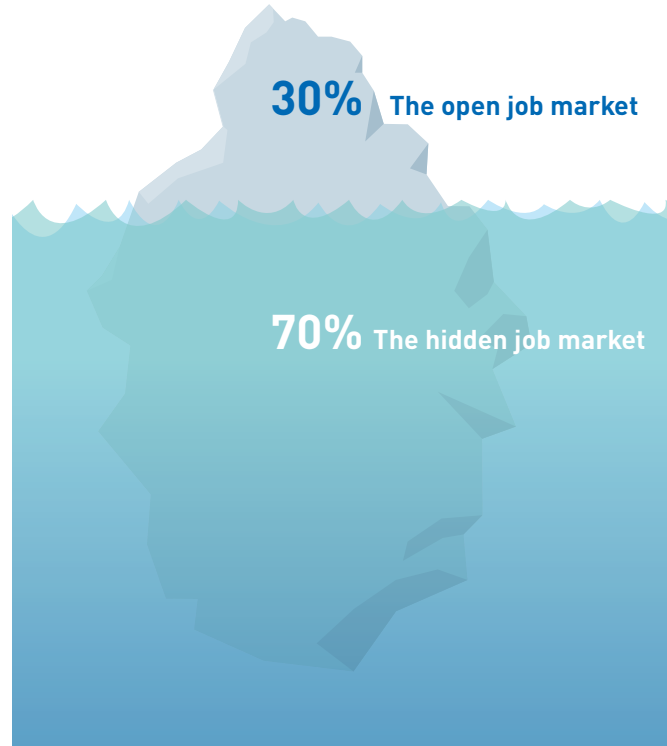


Proactive job search

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

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

In this latter case, you will not have a specific job ad to refer to, or information about the company and the position, so be sure to use your various information channels (alumni, networks, private contacts, career events, etc.) to learn more about the company's divisions and operations before you apply.



First visit the company's website to see if you can find information about unsolicited applications. It's good to know in advance if the company will accept this type of application; then you need to find a specific address or contact person to send it to. If you cannot find the information you need, call the company and ask.

NB:

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

Job advertisements

Analysis

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

→ Tips: Job advertisements

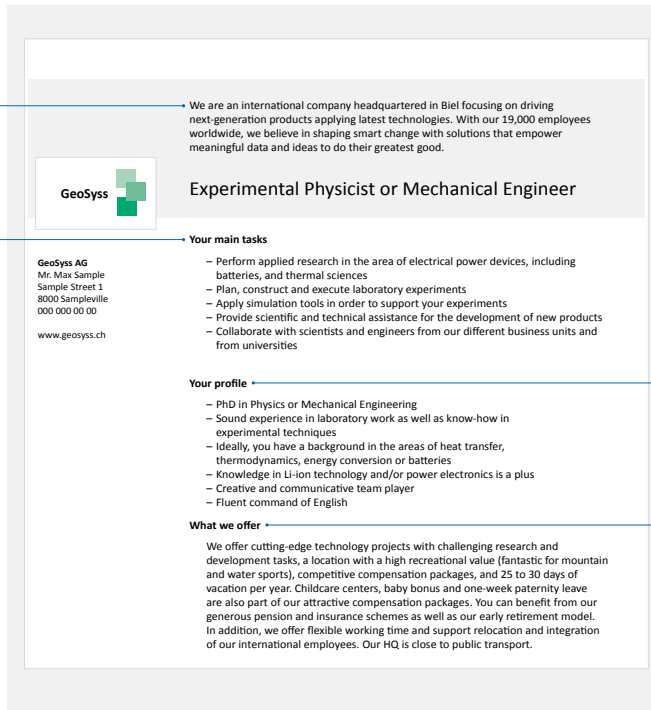
- Read the ad carefully. It will normally describe the company, job specifications, tasks, and perhaps further career opportunities.
- Apply if you meet most requirements, even if you do not meet them all.
- Find out what type of employees the company is looking for. You can usually learn more about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

Company description

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

Position description / key areas of responsibility

This part of the job ad outlines the job's primary tasks. If it is not clear what day-to-day tasks will occupy most of your time, ask about this during the interview.



We are an international company headquartered in Biel focusing on driving next-generation products applying latest technologies. With our 19,000 employees worldwide, we believe in shaping smart change with solutions that empower meaningful data and ideas to do their greatest good.

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

Experimental Physicist or Mechanical Engineer

Your main tasks

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

Your profile

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

What we offer

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

Professional qualifications / required experience / desired skills

Must-have requirements

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

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

Can-have requirements

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

Offer

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

Required key competencies

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

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

In the following, we want to show you how to interpret descriptions of these skills. Be sure to mention and provide real-world examples of all the required soft skills in your cover letter (see the section [Application](#) → [Application documents](#)).



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

→ 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

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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:

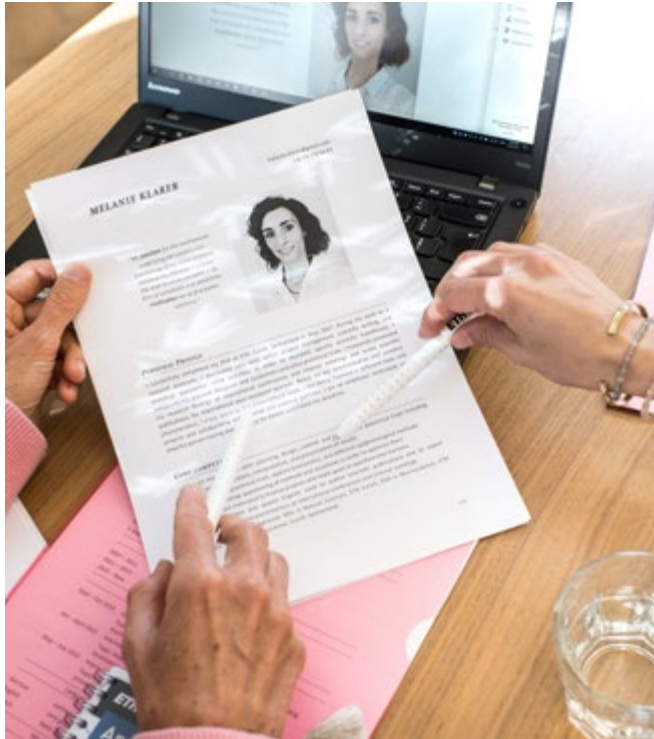
- HR managers often receive 50 or more applications for an advertised position, but just five to ten applicants are invited to a first interview.
- In the first selection round, HR managers' top priority is usually to assess the CV. They get so many applications that they often have just one to three 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.

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*).



ETH ZÜRICH

How many minutes / seconds does a recruiter look at your CV?

6

minutes



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.

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).

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES	
Since 09.2019	Member of the AMIV Association (Akademische Maschinen- und Elektro-Ingenieur 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 LSI Boston/USA 2017
Spanish	Basic
COMPUTER SKILLS	
Operating systems	Windows, LINUX, OSX
Engineering tools	Matlab, ANSYS CFX/ICEM CFD/Workbench, Axcad, Unigraphics NX4, Labview R.D, 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.

Sample CV – doctoral student



02.03.1996
Swiss citizen
Aargöbstrasse 47, CH - 8810 Horgen
+41 79 012 34 56
d.kaufmann@master.ch

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 (03/2016 – 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 Dean's 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/Spyce
 - 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 Services 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 1, 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 1, 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 1, 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
Evaluieren	Interpretieren	Evaluieren
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	Vermehren

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**
 Nelkenstrasse 231
 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 cilita. 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, facilisis pertinacia eu cim. Graece suscipit quo at, nominavi salutatius 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 accomodare no, id vis repudiare dide. Et quo vidit dicam dolore, in sed velit eripuit pertinax. Eam ea dicitat zril, quo aeterno comprehensam quo, his in enim vocent defniebas. Vivendo intellegat sea ut, et liber docendi.

→ Yours sincerely,
 Max Muster

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
 Nelkenstrasse 231
 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 possidonium 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, facilisis 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 eloqueniam id, ea cum.

Section 3: Cu possit ferent intellegebat qui. Mei In vocent defniebas, cu assum convenire necessitatibus has. Vis verear quaestio accommodare no, id vis repudiare dide. Et quo vidit dicam dolore, in sed velit eripuit pertinax. Eam ea didcat zzril, 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?

The Graduate Consulting Club (GCC) is a student association affiliated with ETH Zurich, University of Zurich, and University of Basel that welcomes students from all Swiss universities to join.

We provide support for careers in consulting and close the gap between academia and the consulting industry.

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Application documents checklist

The following tables recap key important points in your application documents – use them as a checklist when re-viewing 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, than this is a semi-structured session.



In an **unstructured interview**, interviewers do not have scripted questions; they respond intuitively to you and your profile. It feels more like a conversation that unfolds naturally. Entirely unstructured interviews are rare. If you find that your interviewers do not have scripted questions, you can steer the conversation in a certain direction. The interviewers, too, can dive deeper into topics and spend more time following up on your replies.

Screening or pre-screening interviews

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

Phone interview

Keep the following in mind for a phone interview:

- Prepare just like you would for a face-to-face interview.
- Be wide awake and alert even if you are conducting the interview from your living room.
- Find a quiet place where you will not be interrupted or disturbed by others.
- Keep your CV in sight and have paper and a pen ready to take notes.
- Make sure you have a good connection, use a landline if available, and switch off call waiting and the like to make sure nothing interferes with your conversation.
- Do not eat, smoke or chew gum during the interview.
- Try to smile – we can hear a smile in someone’s voice as it changes the tone for the better. Some people find it helpful to stand or walk around the room during an important phone call. This can also make your voice sound more powerful.
- Speak clearly and do not rush your words. Give some audible feedback during the interview, for example, by saying “Mmmh”, “I understand”, or the like when the interviewer offers more information about the job.

Video-Interview

A video interview usually consists of a set of pre-recorded questions for you to answer using your computer's camera and microphone. It can also be a live interview via 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 re-cap the key assessment criteria:

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

→ Tips: What to do after the interview

- Recap the interview in your mind. How did it go? Were there any unexpected questions? What went well; what could you do better next time?
- Use your wit and intuition to assess the big picture: On the whole, did you feel comfortable? Did your potential superiors and staff colleagues seem likable? Did the described position match the expectations raised by the job ad? What is your gut telling you: Would you accept an offer?
- Follow up on the next day by emailing some brief feedback to your contact person. Thank them again for the interview. If you still wish to pursue this job, reiterate your interest and let them know that you look forward to hearing from them again soon.
- If you have not heard from the company by the agreed date, get in touch with your contact person.
- If you get a job offer, you can ask for a day or two to consider it if you need this time or have questions that you want to clarify. Use this time to discuss and clear up any doubts with a company representative before accepting the offer.

Starting salaries

Differences by industry, company and position

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

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

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

→ Example A

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

→ Example B

CHF 82,000 annual salary
+ 20 vacation days
+ minimum employer pension contribution mandated by law
+ discount on company products
+ no overtime compensation
≈ CHF 85,000

There are all kinds of statistics about starting salaries to be had, but these should serve merely as indicators. You can find them on the ETH website (Studies/Bachelor/Advice/Studiengänge vergleichen - only on the German site), at [Swissengineering](#), [Swiss ICT](#) and so on.

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

Alternative selection procedures

Tests and assessment centers

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

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

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

Assessment criteria

Assessment centers serve the sole purpose of evaluating candidates. To this end, they often assess the following key competencies:

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

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

→ Tips: Preparing assessments using online resources

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

→ Case studies

www.preplounge.com
<https://graduateconsultingclub.org/>

→ Assessment centers

<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.

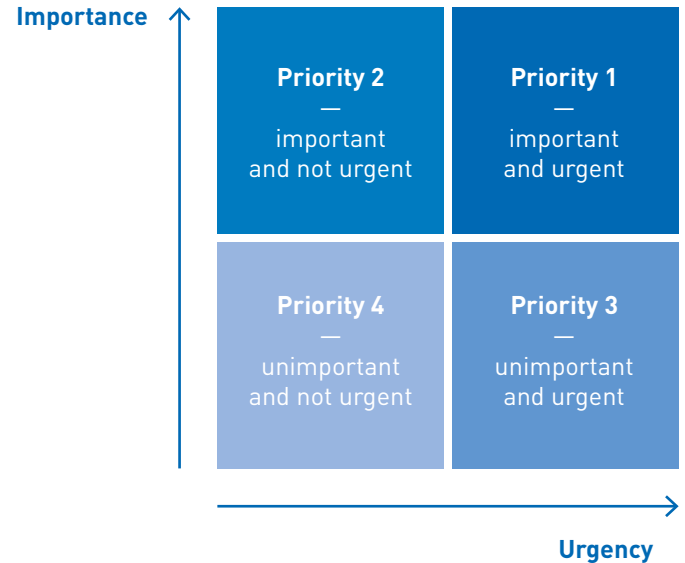
→ Tips: Case studies

- 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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