

Application Guide

for ETH students and doctoral students

CAREER
CENTER



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Introduction

The transition from university to professional life

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

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

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

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





How to use this guide

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

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



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



The ETH Career Center

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

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

More information about our services is to be found at the end of each chapter of this guide and on our website at → 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

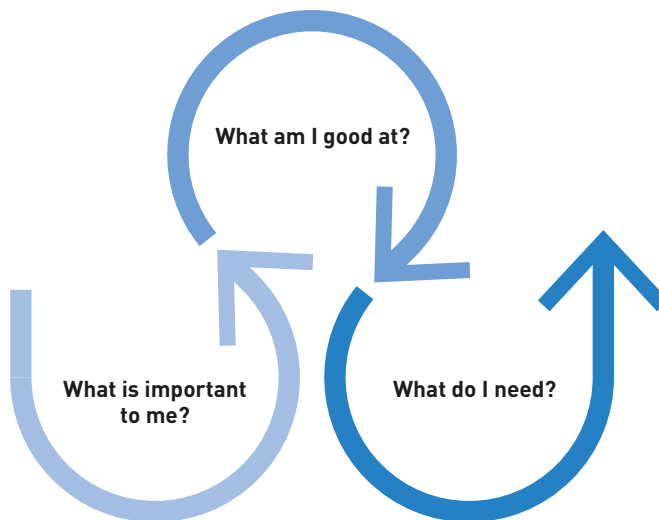
Careful assessment of where you stand is the first step in the application process. It is your launch pad for exploring career options, for focusing on specific sectors and companies, and for the application itself. A rigorous self-analysis will help you focus on organisations and career opportunities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

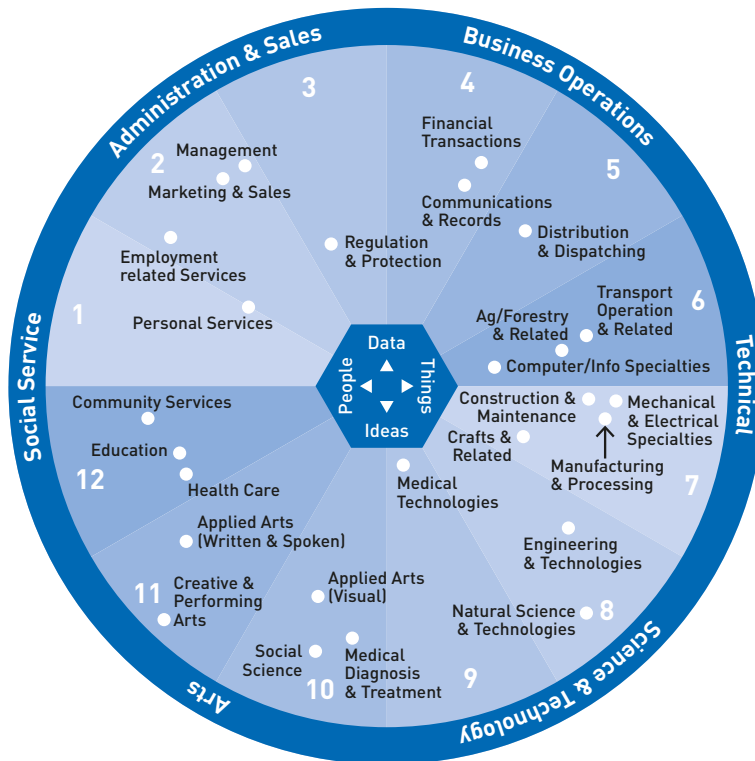
To summarize, review your answers (pages 14 – 18) and note your three main areas of interest.

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:
<https://success.act.org/s/article/The-ACT-Interest-Inventory-and-the-World-of-Work-Map>

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 / tranquillity Avoid pressures and stress in job role and work setting, and seek harmonious relationships. | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |



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

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

Source: University of Denver



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

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

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

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



My technical skills



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

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

Drawing up a list of your skills is not only the key to determining where you stand. This also helps you analyse job offers and write your CV (see the chapter [Focusing → Job advertisement](#)).

**My technical skills acquired
at ETH or other schools**

| 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> |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |



| 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. traits where others gave you a higher score than you gave yourself)? Or are there blind spots (e.g. traits where you ranked yourself higher than others did)? List them here:

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

NB:

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

Blind spots – Traits where you ranked yourself higher than others did. Perhaps you are unaware of certain weaknesses in these areas and therefore tend to play down their importance or avoid opportunities to develop these qualities. Do not be upset if you have blind spots – we all have them! The important thing is that you are aware of them and start looking for opportunities to develop these qualities – especially if they are essential to the job you seek.





My transferable skills

As mentioned before, transferable skills are acquired through experiences in and outside the university at campus activities, internships, part-time jobs, sports, etc. These are skills that you can transfer to other situations and jobs. Typical examples include communication, leadership and organisational skills. You may or may not have work experience, but you surely have more transferable skills than you think.

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

| Transferable skills | Me | | | | Friend | | | | Family | | | |
|--|----|---|---|---|--------|---|---|---|--------|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Analysing and critical thinking | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Solving complex problems and managing data | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Teaching and researching | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Creating and innovating | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Formulating concepts and strategies | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Planning, organising and coordinating | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Following instructions and directions | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Accepting and adapting to change | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Coping with pressure and setbacks, not giving up | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Achieving personal goals | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Entrepreneurial and commercial thinking | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Assessing and making decisions | | | | | | | | | | | | |



| Transferable skills | Me | | | | Friend | | | | Family | | | |
|---|----|---|---|---|--------|---|---|---|--------|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Taking action | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Taking responsibility and getting things done | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Service-mindedness | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Leading, managing and supervising | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ability to collaborate | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Networking and establishing relationships | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Persuading and influencing | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Communicating and presenting information | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Writing and reporting | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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')

Source: shl competency framework,
Future of Jobs Report WEF, Knackonomics



Evidence of my skills

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

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

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

| Skill | 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. |



| Skill | Example of how I put it to use |
|-------|--|
| | Situation Task Activity Results |
| | Situation Task Activity Results |

| Skill | Example of how I put it to use |
|-------|--|
| | Situation Task Activity Results |
| | Situation Task Activity Results |

What do I need?

My needs and expectations

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

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

Further needs and expectations

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

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



My mobility and availability

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

- ☐ 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.emploi.quebec.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/fichiers/pdf/
Publications/00_Bien-se-connaître.pdf](http://www.emploi.quebec.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

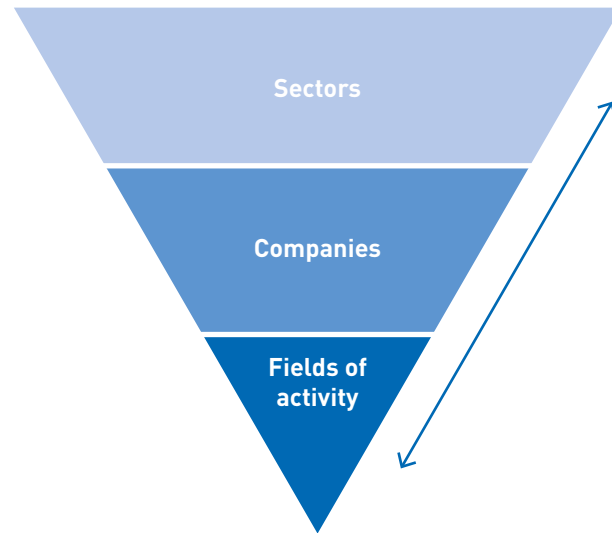
| | |
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My job market

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 Xing or LinkedIn using keywords, find profiles of people at specific companies, and then look at their jobs to learn more about the sectors.

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



Overview of industry sectors

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

Mark and prioritize the sectors that interest you most.

NB:

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

| 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*) | | | | |
| National or multinational operation | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Business offering (products, services) | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Stability (financial situation, competition) | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Organizational structure (flat, hierarchical) | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Corporate culture (dynamic, traditional, conservative) | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| People development (entry-level positions, training programs, career prospects) | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Location | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Work/family life balance | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Job security | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Pay package (salary, fringe benefits) | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Flexible working hours | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Other criteria: | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Other criteria: | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Other criteria: | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |

→ Tips: Exploration

Where can I learn more about potential employers?

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

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

Fields of activity

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

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

If these fields of activity seem vague to you, or if you don't know what lies behind them, the following sources can help you learn more about them as well as about specific job descriptions:



- The ETH website lists fields of activities for all study programs (in German only: ETH Zürich/Studium/Bachelor/Studienangebot/Studiengang/Berufswelt). Some study programs discuss specific job profiles in their brochures.
- Some ETH departments provide brochures with specific job profiles in PDF format. Available online, they can be found using the following search terms (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 Xing 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 of the ETH Application Guide you can read about various and diverse jobs that former ETH students are now performing. Explore them to get a better idea of different job profiles and potential employers.

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| ABB | PwC |
| Axpo | Roche |
| BCG | SBB |
| Bundesverwaltung | Siemens |
| Helbling Technik | Sika |
| Losinger Marazzi | Tiefbauamt Zürich |
| McKinsey & Company | Vontobel |
| Novartis | Zühlke |

Franziska Bosshard, 32

MSc ETH in Electrical Engineering and Information Technology

Tendering Engineer for System Drives at **ABB****How did you find your job?**

Towards the end of my studies I visited various job fairs and talked to many friends and former co-students that had already successfully managed the transition into working life. In this way I heard many positive things about ABB's trainee program for engineering graduates and decided to apply for it.

What influenced your decision to join ABB?

As an intern with ABB during my studies I already got to know ABB as a progressive employer with a positive working atmosphere and interesting technical fields to work in. This experience together with the possibility to start my working life with a trainee program that I could largely customize to my interests were the deciding factors for me to apply to ABB.

What does a typical working day at ABB look like?

I work in a technical sales department and am thus responsible to provide the best possible solution for our customers from a technical point of view. My work is extremely varied thanks to the broad field of applications – wind energy, ore mills and gearbox test stands, to name just a few – and I enjoy the mix between technical work and working with people.

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

I appreciate ABB's open culture, which successfully encourages teamwork and collaboration and puts emphasis on diversity in broad terms. In addition, I highly value the opportunity to be part of an international team and to work independently and self-driven.

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

It is worth getting as much information as possible about various options and to remain open for jobs that might at first glance not be 100% what you are looking for. When it gets more concrete, you should always consider the overall package of an offer and not forget to listen to your gut feeling. Last but not least, always insist on meeting your future boss and if possible also the team in person.





Achievement begins with you.

Get to know more about our employees and their
career stories here: **you.abb.ch**



Annina Mehlisch, 26

MSc ETH in Physics

Quant Analyst Trainee at **Axpo****How did you find your job?**

I came across the trainee position on the Axpo website, which immediately caught my interest. The advantage of a trainee program is that I can gain insights into different areas and build up a group-wide network within a short period of time through six-month rotations.

Why did you decide to join Axpo?

I am very interested in the energy sector and it is facing great challenges, which makes it an exciting time to work at Axpo and contribute to shaping a sustainable future. Axpo is very established in the European energy trade, offering interesting projects in the field of Artificial Intelligence and forecasting modelling in which I can build up and apply my knowledge.

What does your working day look like?

During my assignment at Strategy & Transformation, I was able to further develop my project management skills and build up energy knowledge by working on deep dives into different topics. Through active support in the strategy development, I gained a good overview of Axpo and got to know many interesting Axpo employees. During my first rotation in the Trading & Sales division, I developed, implemented

and tested load forecasting models. Because I have been working from home for most of the last few months, regular check-ins with the team and coffee calls are part of a “normal” working day.

What do you particularly appreciate about your work at Axpo?

The variety of projects and constantly changing challenges ensure that there is never a dull moment. Furthermore, the world of energy fascinates me immensely and I am happy to be part of a dynamic company with exciting employees.

What do you recommend to students for their career entry?

During my time at ETH, I visited job fairs to talk to employees from different companies about their daily work, entry opportunities and company culture. These inputs influenced and facilitated my career opportunities after graduation.



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axpo.com/career



Clara Beck, 30

MSc ETH in Mechanical Engineering

Project Leader at **BCG****How did you find your job?**

The first time I heard about consulting and BCG, was at the Polymesse. I then decided to apply to a BCG multiple day event to see for myself what the job is all about. After having spent 2 days cracking a case and having a good time in Vienna, I was convinced that the job, my future colleagues, and the things I would learn, would be the right next step for me after graduating from ETH. I did the interviews and started a few months later as an Associate in Zurich.

Why did you decide to take a job at BCG?

Three factors convinced me to join BCG. 1: the job – as a consultant you have the chance to work in different industries, on different topics with various clients. A guarantee that I would never get bored AND would learn a lot. 2: BCG's people – I got along extremely well with everyone I had met from BCG. Given that you spend a lot of time with your colleagues, it's important to have a good connection. 3: Career opportunity – as a graduate I wasn't sure I would be in consulting forever but having this on your CV will only be helpful to get a great next position several years later.

What does your typical work day at BCG look like?

That is difficult to say, because no day looks like the other one and it heavily depends on the project I work on. Typically, I would start my day with a 15min check in or "stand-up" with my team to align on the priorities for the day. Nowadays we do that over Zoom (camera on!! :-)) then I would clean up my emails and/or prepare specific meetings that I will have later in the day with clients or internal leadership (like Managing Directors and Partners).

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

My colleagues, we have an amazing crowd of interesting, driven and diverse people at BCG and that takes you a long way especially in stressful situations. I have met some of my closest friends at BCG.

What recommendations do you have for students on the verge of starting their careers?

Invest in yourself, constantly ask yourself where you can grow, how you can improve and what you want to achieve professionally. Then, be patient, your career is long and there will be ups and downs.



JOIN CLARA IN OUR CONSULTING TEAM

After finishing her Msc in Mechanical Engineering at ETH, Clara started as an Associate at BCG.

She has since worked on a number of projects in various industries: Consumer Goods, Medical Technologies, Industrial Goods and Telecommunication.

She has worked in Switzerland and spent 1 year in Australia, working from the Melbourne office, before she became a Project Leader consulting mainly Medical Technologies clients in the Zurich office.



Unlock your potential.
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Welcome to the Group.



Sandie Pasche, 27

MSc ETH in Applied Geophysics

Scientific Project Manager in the Explosives and Ammunition Surveillance Division at **armasuisse S+T**

How did you find your job?

First, I applied for an internship at the DDPS in armasuisse Immobilien. There I dealt with the topic of soil pollution. At the end of my internship, I was advised to apply for a position as a scientific project manager at armasuisse Science and Technology, as this new position would mainly deal with environmental issues. A field in which I knew I wanted to continue working in.

What influenced your decision to join armasuisse S+T?

Thanks to my internship, I knew that the topics would be diverse, spread all over Switzerland and would take place in different linguistic contexts. In addition, I also had the opportunity to meet some of my colleagues and learn about their current projects.

What does a typical working day at armasuisse S+T look like?

No two days are the same. Sometimes I am out all day testing or sampling. Sometimes I spend the whole day in the office studying scientific literature and attending meetings with partners and colleagues.

What in particular do you like about your job at armasuisse S+T?

The atmosphere within my team, the variety of projects and the specificity of the topics covered.

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

I think they should not be afraid to apply, even if they are not fully qualified. Starting with an internship will help them to ask themselves the right questions about the positions they want to fill later on. When they are sure the job is a good fit for them, they show more confidence, which is a definite advantage when entering the workforce.



I assess the flood situation
in all regions.
I work for Switzerland.

Coralie

Geosciences,
Specialist in hydrological forecasting

stelle.admin.ch



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Federal Administration

Working for Switzerland

Dorothea Reusser, 30

MSc ETH in Mechanical Engineering

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

I had already worked at Helbling during my industrial internship between my Bachelor and Master studies. After finishing my studies and working for Disney Research for two years, I was looking for a new challenge. Since I liked my internship at Helbling due to the variety and the challenges, and as I had learned many new things, I looked for an opportunity on their website and found a job which matched my interests.

What influenced your decision to join Helbling Technik?

Working in interdisciplinary teams fascinates me. Everyone has his or her specific background and approaches complex tasks in different ways. Together you can face challenges and complete exciting projects. You live and learn.

What does a typical working day at Helbling Technik look like?

It's very diverse. I work in the field of device development where designing alone in front of my computer alternates with team meetings, testing in the workshop and phone calls with suppliers.

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

Helbling Technik has a wide range of different clients with a huge variety of projects. Therefore, you always adjust to a new field and manage new challenges. Also, you can create a new, tangible product from an idea that you can touch and may come across later in your everyday life.

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

It is important to know what your interests and strengths are. Just because your friends or colleagues like programming and are looking for a job in that field does not necessarily mean that this needs to be your path. To force yourself into a pre-defined scheme does not make you happy. Live your own life - walk your own path.



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.

Want to be part of it?
We look forward to receiving your
application through our job portal.
www.helbling.ch/career



Helbling Technik

Innovation, together we do it

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Lennart Rogenhofer, 26

BSC und MSc in Maschineningenieurwissenschaften

Ingenieur und Data Steward Energieeffizienz bei **Losinger Marazzi**

Wie haben Sie Ihre Stelle gefunden?

Nach meiner Masterarbeit am Future Cities Laboratory wurde mir von ein paar Kontakten an der EMPA die Firma Losinger Marazzi empfohlen. Meine Stelle gab es damals in der heutigen Aufgabestellung noch nicht, also haben wir uns auf ein Praktikum zum Einstieg geeinigt welches sich dann in eine feste Anstellung umgewandelt hat.

Warum haben Sie sich für Losinger Marazzi entschieden?

Ich habe in meinem Studium einen Fokus auf erneuerbare Energien gesetzt. Bei Losinger Marazzi wurde mir die Möglichkeit geboten, Energiekonzepte von ganzen Quartieren mit zu beeinflussen und Investoren erneuerbare alternativen anzubieten. Schon in meinem Bewerbungsgespräch wurde mir klar, dass ich bei Losinger nicht nur eine Stelle füllen würde, sondern meine Rolle selbst mitdefinieren konnte.

Wie sieht Ihr Arbeitsalltag bei Losinger Marazzi aus?

Ich arbeite vor allem an zwei Themengebieten, einerseits an der Digitalisierung der Firma bezüglich Energiedaten, und andererseits an Energie-Konzepten und Businessmodellen. Bezüglich der Digitalisierung definiere und teste ich Prozesse

in Bezug auf die Energiedaten und deren Verarbeitung um einen Mehrwert zu kreieren. In der Energiekonzeption versuche ich über neue Businessmodelle die Umsetzung erneuerbarer Energieträger zu fördern.

Was schätzen Sie besonders an Ihrer Tätigkeit bei Losinger Marazzi?

Wichtig war mir von Anfang an, dass mir viel Vertrauen und Verantwortung gegeben wurde. Ich habe viele Freiheiten in meinem Job, und habe dabei das Gefühl durch meine Tätigkeit, in der Förderung von erneuerbaren Energien etwas Gutes zu tun. Vor kurzem hat die Firma eine ambitionierte Dekarbonisierungsstrategie vorgestellt – das bestätigt mir, dass ich am richtigen Ort arbeite.

Was empfehlen Sie Studierenden für ihren Karriereeinstieg?

Ich denke, das Essenzielle ist es die zukünftigen Mitarbeiter und Chef kennen zu lernen. Diese Personen werden vor allem in den ersten Monaten und Jahren deinen Arbeitsalltag prägen und viel Wissen und Erfahrungen teilen können.



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[losinger-marazzi.ch](https://www.losinger-marazzi.ch)

**LOSINGER
MARAZZI**

Shared **innovation**

Nicolas Blondel, 28

MSc ETH in Mechanical Engineering (MAVT)

Consultant at **McKinsey & Company****How did you find your job?**

During my mandatory industry internship, I met different people with a background in management consulting. I was very impressed by their skillset and experience, so I decided to learn more about this career path. Colleagues in the alumni network of ETH Juniors, various recruiting events of consulting companies and an internship at McKinsey then fully convinced me to apply for a full time position.

What influenced your decision to join McKinsey & Company?

Consulting was the right choice for me after my technical studies at ETH. Here I can develop my personal and professional skills complementary to my study background - at a very high pace. I am able to work on projects across all industries, functions and geographies, with different people. Usually, projects change every three months. McKinsey in particular is the leading management consultancy with unique opportunities for personal growth.

What does a typical working day at McKinsey & Company look like?

Working days are as diverse as the projects here. Constants

in my daily work are tools like PowerPoint, Excel und Alteryx, problem solving sessions and client meetings. I also travel quite a bit.

What in particular do you like about your job at McKinsey & Company?

Apart from the diverse work and my steep learning curve, I particularly value my exceptional colleagues. I love that I am constantly surrounded by inspiring people who are caring and energetic.

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

I would advise all students to gather various professional experience already during their studies and to engage in ETH associations. The resulting network and gathered experiences highlight personal preferences and help tremendously to decide on what professional step to take next.



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Christoph Dumelin, 41

Dr. sc. ETH in Pharmaceutical Sciences

Laboratory Head and Project Leader at **Novartis**

How did you find your job?

Through my network from my graduate and postdoctoral studies I learned that Novartis was looking for someone with my scientific background. Then, I reached out to Novartis associates I had previously met at conferences and applied for the position.

What influenced your decision to join Novartis?

After several years in academia and the biotech industry, I was interested in gaining experience in the pharmaceutical industry and wanted to continue to work on innovative and impactful research projects. This as well as maintaining a reasonable work-life-balance were important criteria for me.

What does a typical working day at Novartis look like?

I lead a lab with two scientists. We mainly focus on the application of novel technologies for the identification of molecules with desired pharmacological effects. In different project teams around the globe, some led by myself, we work on several disease indications. Depending on the project status, we either design or interpret specific experiments or take care of the planning, set-up or future focusing of a

project. This often happens in discussions in person or through videoconferences but also via exchange of emails via computer.

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

Working on complex research projects as well as the continuously evolving scientific and strategic questions present regular challenges and make the job interesting for me. In addition, I enjoy working in teams and find it very motivating that, if the development of a new drug is successful, I can contribute to solve a societal need.

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

Ideally, one already spends some time during the studies on identifying occupations and companies that suit oneself well. Starting early to build a network can also be beneficial when you are looking for a job. Once having transitioned into work life there are obviously many new things to learn. For me, this was for example the case with leading project teams in which people with diverse backgrounds collaborate.





Novartis

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Vladislav Bunkin, 27

MSc ETH in Mathematics

Senior Associate Data & Analytics at **PwC Switzerland****How did you find your job?**

This may sound familiar to many students: When you graduate from university, you feel like having so much time to find your right calling and that the right job will reveal itself automatically one day. At least I believed so. Yet, I still visited various job fairs to enrich the business card collection in my desk drawer. And these visits really did the trick for me. Some companies continuously sparked my interest, which made me initiate researching them, reading their job postings and contacting their people I had already met during the numerous job fair events.

What influenced your decision to join PwC?

The projects and culture of the team I aimed to join sounded excellent. PwC's network, reputation and career impact, aligned with the possibility to solve real-world problems using analytics, was also very promising. What really caught my eye was the 'vibe' the people were giving off when I visited the office. It is an approachable and congenial, yet lively and driven atmosphere.

What does a typical working day at PwC look like?

It vastly differs for people and projects. But the common

denominator definitely includes meeting new people, learning (about) new technologies and enriching coffee breaks. On a typical day on my current project I spend the morning with colleagues developing a software that uses machine learning and probabilistic models to detect illicit market behaviour. After lunch, we have some time reserved for update meetings with the client and/or the bigger project team. We spend the remaining afternoon on further development.

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

I really enjoy the fun and relaxed team atmosphere. A great plus is the flexibility at PwC – we can compensate over-time, work from the home office and schedule our days flexible. I also enjoy my tasks and projects and the way my typical working days are structured.

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

Talk to someone who works in the team where you want to apply, if possible. Also, don't stress yourself about making the perfect decision from the get-go. It's never final. Before I got that advice, I was over-analysing everything. It's all about the balance!





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Jonas Dorn, 43

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 authorities, 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 [Plug Roche internship here?]. This will both 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.





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Thomas Dewael, 27

MSc ETH in Bauingenieurwissenschaften

Business Process Engineer bei **SBB****Wie haben Sie Ihre Stelle gefunden?**

Ich habe an einem Schnuppertag teilgenommen und so das 18-monatige Trainee Programm kennengelernt. Als Trainee habe ich zunächst 4 spannende Stellen in unterschiedlichen Bereichen durchlaufen, eine davon im Ausland. Im Anschluss an das Programm wurde ich eingestellt, und bin nun verantwortlich für die Externalisierung von rund 200 Mio. CHF pro Jahr an Fahrbahnprojekten.

Warum haben Sie sich für die SBB entschieden?

Die SBB ist ein sehr modernes Unternehmen. Die digitale Arbeitsumgebung und die Arbeitskultur erlauben mir eine freie örtliche und zeitliche Gestaltung meines Arbeitsalltags. Ich als Bilingue schätze auch die Mehrsprachigkeit im Konzern sehr. Dadurch fühlt man sich, als wäre man in einem internationalen Unternehmen. Gleichzeitig ist die SBB ein sehr familiäres Unternehmen – ich bin mit jedem per Du.

Wie sieht Ihr Arbeitsalltag bei der SBB aus?

Ich arbeite in verschiedenen Teams quer durch das Unternehmen mit. Wir schreiben grosse Leistungsvolumen am Markt aus und bauen neue Lieferanten auf. Dazu bin ich von Zürich bis Lausanne immer wieder mit dem Zug unterwegs.

Manchmal bin ich sehr nah an den Bauprojekten, manchmal sprechen wir vom Planungshorizont 2035.

Was schätzen Sie besonders an Ihrer Tätigkeit bei der SBB?

Mein Job ist abwechslungsreich und kommt mit viel Verantwortung daher. Ich kann hier tatsächlich was Grosses machen und die Schweiz bewegen. Dank dem Trainee Programm bin ich überall vernetzt und treffe täglich Kolleginnen und Kollegen und ehemalige Trainees im Büro, bei Events oder für Pausen.

Was empfehlen Sie Studierenden für ihren Karriereestieg?

Beim Bewerben geht Qualität über Quantität. Speziell ETH-Studierende können es sich erlauben, sich gezielt auf ihre Wunschstellen zu bewerben. Wichtig ist, bescheiden zu bleiben und sich bewusst sein, dass man noch wenig kann, aber schnell lernt. Weiss man noch nicht genau in welcher Richtung man sich spezialisieren möchte, empfiehlt sich ein Einstiegsprogramm wie das Trainee Programm der SBB.





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Patienten- und
Menschenrechte.
2017
Hochschulpraktikum
im EJPD bei
Frau Sommerogg.
2011-17
Bachelor of Law Uni Bern.
Master of Law, Uni Bern.
§
2014-16
Kundenberaterin im
SBB Contact Center Brig.
Seit 2016
Nutze meine Vielseitigkeit
als Trainee, HOP bei der SBB.
Seit 2018
Stiftungsratsmandat
bei HOPe.

Maria Husmann, 37

BSc, MSc, PhD ETH in Informatics

Team Lead «Web of Things» at **Siemens**

How did you find your job?

I hadn't thought of Siemens Switzerland as being an IT employer. After completing my doctorate, I was looking for positions in a research environment on a job exchange when I came across an advert on www.siemens.ch/jobs. The topics of Smart Buildings and IoT really appealed to me and I applied for them even though I didn't have some of the qualifications requested.

What influenced your decision to join Siemens?

The culture within my team is very important to me and the interview left a positive impression. When I asked for a part-time position because I am still teaching at a university, the reaction was very positive. I have already experienced other types of reactions.

What does a typical working day at Siemens look like?

I head a small team in the pre-development. We evaluate new technologies and build prototypes to discover how research findings can be translated into products. To do this, I work with experts within the company and with universities. Communication with product management is also important here, so that we can solve the important

problems and actually incorporate our results into the products.

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

Siemens' business is based on addressing important issues such as sustainability. I contribute to this with the development of intelligent and efficient buildings. It's very motivating. I also have a lot of freedom in my work and am constantly in contact with new technologies. It never gets boring.

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

Have a look around and apply widely. With every interview you learn more - including where your priorities are. Don't put too much pressure on yourself to find the perfect position. If a company appeals to you, it is also worth setting up a job subscription. At Siemens, you are informed about every vacancy in the selected area of interest via www.siemens.ch/jobalert





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SIEMENS

Cornelia Böfer, 30

MSc ETH Chemistry

Project Manager at Sika

How did you find your job?

I first applied for an internship at Sika that was posted online. Shortly after I was contacted by Sika's HR Department and they invited me to an interview for a position that had just opened up at a different Sika location.

What influenced your decision to join Sika?

It was my goal to start my career in a globally operating and innovation-oriented company. In addition to the usual advantages of a large corporation, what impressed me most about Sika was the deeply rooted family corporate culture, which is strongly felt amongst employees. The very varied and challenging field of activity as well as the empowerment oriented leadership completed my positive image of Sika.

What does a typical working day at Sika look like?

I am Project Manager and I develop adhesives which are used in the automotive industry. My working day is very varied. The focus is on project planning, developing product formulations, carrying out laboratory work myself and planning for other employees and evaluating the results. Other tasks include writing reports, internal meetings, customer advice and visits, researching raw materials and supervising

production trials at the plant. Sika also allows me to attend professional conferences for further development.

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

As I described my job is very diverse, the projects are exciting and customer-oriented and the whole environment we work in is very innovative. The internal, global cooperation is effective and fun because all my colleagues are helpful and down-to-earth. In our department there is a really special and familiar way of working together.

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

I recommend everyone to get an early insight into different industrial sectors and companies in order to be able to assess which career path you want to take. Often you do not need a PhD for the area you would want to work in. During the application process, I recommend to try to get to know your future colleagues, as you will spend a lot of time together.



EMPOWERED



“The varied, innovative and challenging position, as well as the empowerment oriented leadership convinced me that I have chosen the right employer.”

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BUILDING TRUST



Roland Hagenbüchli, 27

MSc ETH in Umweltingenieurwissenschaften

Trainee beim **Tiefbauamt der Stadt Zürich****Wie haben Sie Ihre Stelle gefunden?**

Am Kontakttreffen Höggerberg wurde ich das erste Mal auf das Traineeprogramm aufmerksam. Später, an der im November angebotenen Infoveranstaltung für Studierende, wurde das Programm detailliert durch aktuelle Trainees und erfahrene Projektleitende vorgestellt, was mir einen guten Einblick in den Arbeitsalltag eines Trainees ermöglichte. Durch die Erfahrungen eines engen Kollegen, der bereits mit dem Programm begonnen hatte, war ich mir sicher, dass das Traineeprogramm das Richtige für mich ist.

Warum haben Sie sich für Tiefbauamt der Stadt Zürich entschieden?

Neben den attraktiven Anstellungsbedingungen der Stadt Zürich war für mich vor allem der breite Einblick in unterschiedliche Projekte ausschlaggebend. Das Traineeprogramm bietet einen sehr interessanten und vielfältigen Einstieg in die Berufswelt und gleichzeitig die Möglichkeit, den öffentlichen Raum aktiv mitzugestalten.

Wie sieht Ihr Arbeitsalltag bei Tiefbauamt der Stadt Zürich aus?

Als Trainee durchläuft man verschiedene Geschäftsbereiche

des Tiefbauamts. Zurzeit bin ich im Bereich Planung + Projektierung tätig und arbeite an Strassenbau- und Werkleutungsprojekten. Meine Aufgaben entsprechen denjenigen von Projektleitenden, sprich die Koordination der Projektbeteiligten als Ansprechperson und die Erarbeitung der nötigen Dokumente und Pläne in Zusammenarbeit mit Ingenieurbüros, Planern und diversen Fachspezialisten. Dabei steht mir stets ein erfahrener Mentor unterstützend zur Seite, der mir bei Fragen und Herausforderungen weiterhilft.

Was schätzen Sie besonders an Ihrer Tätigkeit bei Tiefbauamt der Stadt Zürich?

Dass ich die Stadt, in der ich selber lebe, aktiv mitgestalten kann und dabei auch eine völlig neue Sichtweise auf den öffentlich Raum gewinne. Ich bin noch immer erstaunt, wie viele Ansprüche an eine «normale» Strasse gestellt werden und was für eine enorme Arbeit hinter einem Strassenbauprojekt steckt.

Was empfehlen Sie Studierenden für ihren Karriereestieg?

Neue Herausforderungen mutig annehmen und von den Erfahrungen der Kolleginnen und Kollegen profitieren.



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

Mario Vontobel, 29

MSc ETH in Applied Mathematics

Graduate Trainee as IT Business Engineer at **Vontobel****How did you find your job?**

Early on, during my studies, I made the decision to start my career with a Traineeship. Until this day, I am completely convinced of the diverse opportunities of such a program. With the help of the known channels like career fairs, Alumni-presentations and the internet, I found Vontobel's Graduate Trainee Programme (vontobel.com/gtp).

What influenced your decision to join Vontobel?

Having the same name by accident sparked my interest but the final decision was made because of the quality of Vontobel. Vontobel is performance-oriented and innovative in a quantitative field. I believe the size of the company is ideal as Vontobel is big enough to offer almost every task a major bank can. However, it still is able to be efficient and flexible. This makes it possible to consider the needs and competencies of each employee and engages them to being proactive and generating measurable output.

What does a typical working day at Vontobel look like?

Within the different teams, I independently support the daily business or my work is based around a project where I get support. My daily tasks include analysing processes, imple-

menting improvements in a number of areas or enhancing existing programs.

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

No matter where, I have always worked with motivated and qualified people. However, the most stimulating part of my job is that I get to learn new things every day and I get to see all the mechanisms in the greater picture and how they work. Additionally, it may not be the most relevant thing, I feel the appreciation Vontobel has for its employees through the free meals in our staff restaurant.

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

I would recommend being patient at the beginning of a career and to take the time to explore the many different possibilities. Afterwards, like many things in life, you make progress by drawing your conclusions of every experience you make.



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Andres Konrad, 27

MSc ETH Computer Science (INFK)

Java Software Engineer at **Zühlke****How did you find your job?**

Zühlke made a positive impression on me early on at various career fairs. I was able to find out more about Zühlke in an hour-long interview at the ETH Campus Interview. Then I applied via the online portal shortly before commencing my Master's thesis. After two pleasant – and in my opinion very professional – interviews, Zühlke offered me a job.

What made you choose Zühlke?

I had a good gut feeling about Zühlke from the get-go. I got along extremely well with all the employees I came into contact with and it became clear to me at an early stage that a modern corporate culture is the norm there. In addition, you can invest a lot of time in further training at Zühlke. And the company also offers a variety of attractive projects that constantly challenge you.

What is a typical work day like at Zühlke?

Every day is different, depending on the project you're working on. I'm currently working for a client in the centre of Zurich, where we're building an econometric platform using Java. I've also spent time working on projects with other clients in Schlieren and Bern, and the technology stack is

always different. But I don't just sit at a computer and program. I also often spend time planning, drafting and discussing things with the team – at our Scrum events, for example.

What do you like most about your role at Zühlke?

I really like the variety that my role at Zühlke offers. You're constantly tasked with implementing new solutions in a range of projects and you can always count on highly motivated team members. The 20 training days and occasional social events also offer plenty of variety.

What advice would you give to students starting their careers?

Check out as many companies as you like and treat each job interview as practice. You'll only find the right role and company for you by familiarising yourself with different companies. And don't be intimidated by the broad list of profile requirements stipulated in some job advertisements – even after completing a Bachelor's or a Master's degree, you can't know everything.



Over heels

Head

in love with data.

Titus von Köller, Data Engineer



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Entry-level positions

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

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

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

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

“Job advertisements” section in chapter entitled [Focusing](#) → [Job advertisements](#)).

Direct-entry and trainee programmes

Companies also distinguish between direct entry, where you jump straight into the job, and trainee programmes that ease you into working life. A direct-entry position fills a specific vacancy in a specific department; a trainee program has you working in various departments throughout the company. In the latter case, you might be able to pick a job in the department that suits you best when the programme ends, provided there is a vacancy to be filled. Although the assignments in the various departments are temporary, a trainee programme is not the same as an internship. It is a real entry-level job with certain responsibilities that gets your career off the ground.



Large enterprises especially offer special trainee programmes alongside direct-entry opportunities. These 12-to-24 month engagements give you plenty of time to get to know the company well. Trainees take part in the day-to-day business of each department and shoulder the responsibility for tasks in projects. This is to prepare you for future project management, leadership or other responsibilities.

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



Networking

What is networking?

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

— Larry James

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

Conferences and company events

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

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

If you want to make a professional impression, you need to prepare well for your visit to a job fair or conference:





1. First consider which companies you want to approach at the fair.
2. Learn more about these companies before the fair. Company representatives are less than impressed by questions like, “What exactly does your company do?”
3. Make sure your application documents are ready to go so you can submit your CV if you have a promising chat.
4. Prepare a so-called “elevator pitch”. It is called that because it has to be quick and to the point, like a pitch you would give to a CEO, investor or other hard-to-reach decision-maker that you happen to meet in an elevator. You have 30 seconds to sell your business idea well enough for your captive audience to want to know more about it. This method is very well suited for introducing yourself to company representatives with a few well-chosen lines.
5. You should also prepare some good questions. For example:
 - What skills and experience are you looking for, especially from university graduates?
 - What are the biggest challenges for the xy position...?
 - How exactly do you go about recruiting? Do you recruit all year round or only at certain times?
 - How would you describe your corporate culture? What do you personally like most about the company?
6. You should come to some sort of arrangement by the end of the conversation. For example, you could ask whether you can contact the person you are talking to directly or refer to your conversation if you decide to apply to the company.

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



Where are you headed?



Autumn semester
4th to 7th October 2021



ETH Zürich

poly↔**messe**

During four 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 Alumni Pavillon of ETH Zurich 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

voeth



polymesse.ch

Senior students and alumni

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

Student associations

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

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

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



Your international network for female students and women in STEM



Femtec partners with leading tech companies, research institutes and technical universities. Jointly, we offer unique support to advance sustainable careers.

Partnering companies, research institutes and universities



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 and www.xing.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

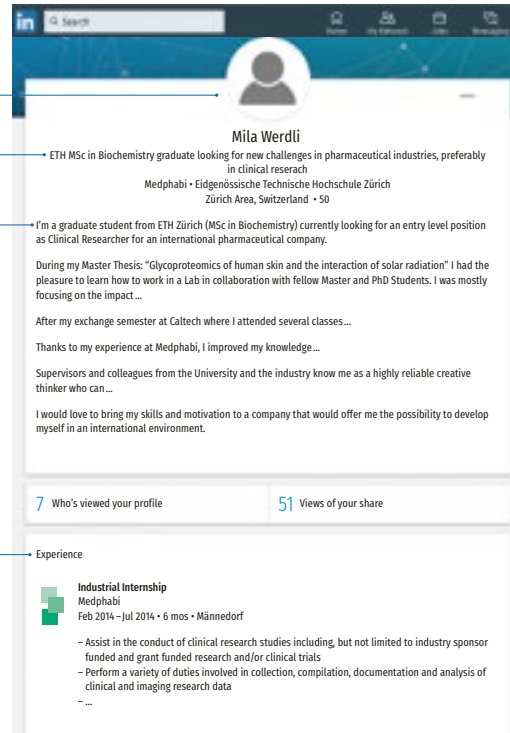
Customize your LinkedIn URL under "Contact and Personal Info" to make it easier for people to find you.

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.



Education



ETH Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich
Master of Science (MSc) Biochemistry
2014–2016
Master Thesis: "Glycoproteomics of human skin and the interaction of solar radiation"
Focus on:
– N-linked glycosylation of secretory proteins
– Enzymatic reactions in the glycoprotein synthetic pathway
– ...
Selected Master Courses:
– Glycobiology
– Enzymatic Chemistry
– ...


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


Volunteering Experience & Causes

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

Accomplishments**4 Languages**

German
Native or bilingual proficiency

English
Full professional proficiency

Spanish
Professional working proficiency

Chinese
Elementary proficiency

1 Project

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

Teammates**Following**

 **Liumus**
85,202 followers

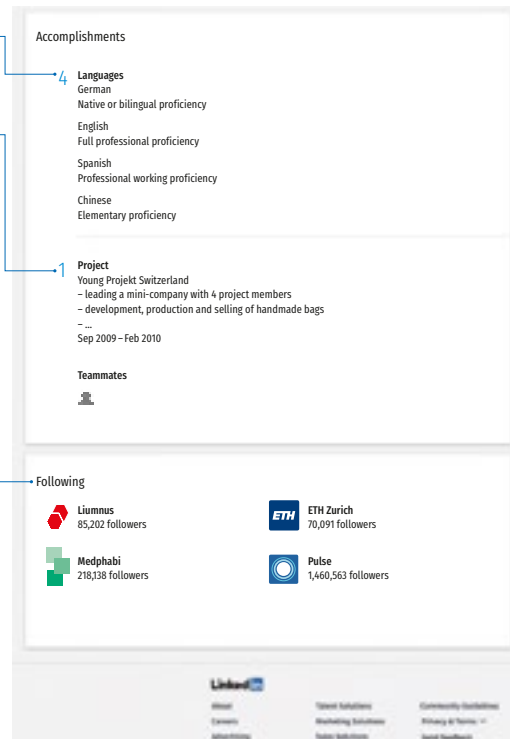
 **ETH Zurich**
70,091 followers

 **Medphabi**
218,138 followers

 **Pulse**
1,460,563 followers

NB:

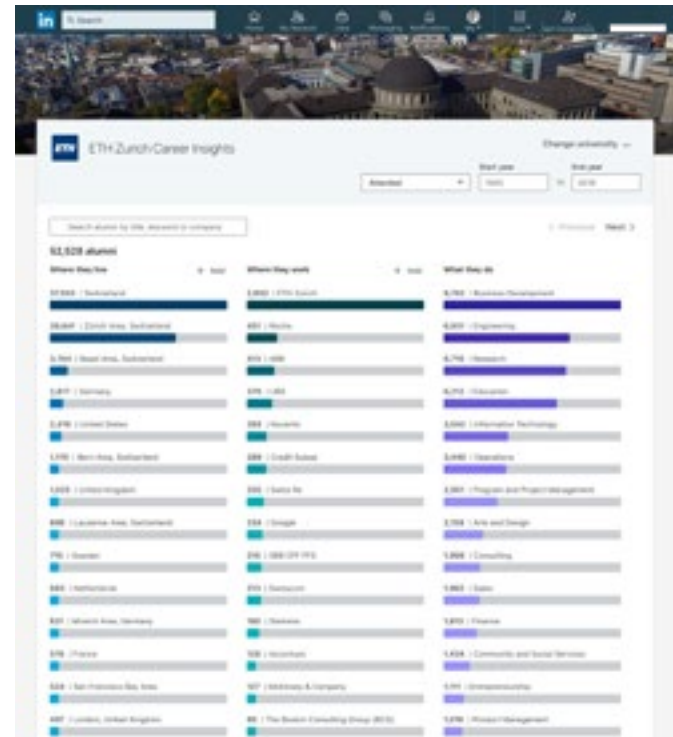
We recommend that you go to *Settings & Privacy / Profile privacy* and set *Share profile edits* to *No*. That way, your contacts will not get a notification every time you update your profile.



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 |
|--------|-----------|--------------------|
| | | |
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| My most important requirements for a future employer | | |
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→ Tips: Exploration

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

→ ETH Career Center offering: Exploration

- Individual sessions to determine sectors and fields of activity
- Annual Career Weeks in March and October: Various career events with companies to provide insights into various job profiles and establish contacts with company representatives (e.g. Career Breakfast, Career Sandwich, Career & Beer, Career Livestream)
- Long Night of the Careers at the ETH Zurich (biennially in November)
- Panel discussions

Information

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



Career?

We accompany you! Your ETH Alumni

www.alumni.ethz.ch/career-services



«Working at a research facility in India for several months presented itself as a unique experience that I will remember for a lifetime.

The country's rich culture and openhearted people stood often very much in contrast to the environment I was used to from Zürich, giving me new perspectives on various aspects of life. Professionally I learned to appreciate how smooth approvals or meetings run in Switzerland, while I also discovered how lengthy discussions and room for unforeseen circumstances can help steer a project into a completely new direction. Being involved in several projects during my time abroad led me to meet many different people and learn how to work with equipment I was not entirely familiar with.

An overall relaxed work atmosphere gave me the chance to discover parts of this huge but breathtaking country together with other interns from all over the world. This internship gave me the opportunity to experience a very different culture, go on great adventures and make many new friendships with people not only from India but from all around the globe.»

**International
Work Experience**

**Paid internships
in over
80 countries**

Nicole Schulz, Medical Technology Student at the ETH Zürich. Nicole did her 2-month internship at the Manipal Institute of Technology in Manipal, India in autumn 2019.

**All currently available internships
you can find here:**
www.iaeste.ch/en/internship-offers



IAESTE
SWITZERLAND

IAESTE internships...

- ... apply for students in **technical study fields and natural science**
- ... are **paid**: the salary covers the local costs of living and lodging
- ... offer **numerous benefits**: support during the application period, social network in the country of internship and many more
- ... have a duration from **6 weeks to 12 month**



3 — FOCUSING

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Job search

Strategies and techniques

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

Company websites

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



Job platforms

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

General job portals

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

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.bankingjobs.ch, 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 ETH's Career & Beer get-togethers and trade fairs offer very good opportunities to learn more about potential fields of activity, vacancies, entry programs and application processes. Often a good opening chat and a positive impression leads to a job interview. So be sure to prepare thoroughly before you talk to company representatives (see the chapter [Exploration](#) → [Networking](#) for more on this).

Recruitment agencies

Recruitment agencies specialise in searching for candidates to fit a given job profile. Some have contracts with companies, but these agencies are more likely to look for people for management positions or with highly specialised experience. These profiles are hard to find on the job market, so companies are prepared to pay the agency a finder's fee.

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

NB:

Recruiters occasionally publish ads for unavailable or even fictional jobs. They archive incoming applications in a database to generate numbers that will attract and acquire new corporate customers. This could explain why a recruiter who is interviewing you will not disclose the name of the company behind the job ad.

Personal contacts and networking

At career events and at play, nurturing your network is likely to pay off in terms of real job offers. It is not uncommon for employers to first seek potential candidates for a position through the networks that connect employees and colleagues before they officially advertise the vacancy.

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

Social networking platforms

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



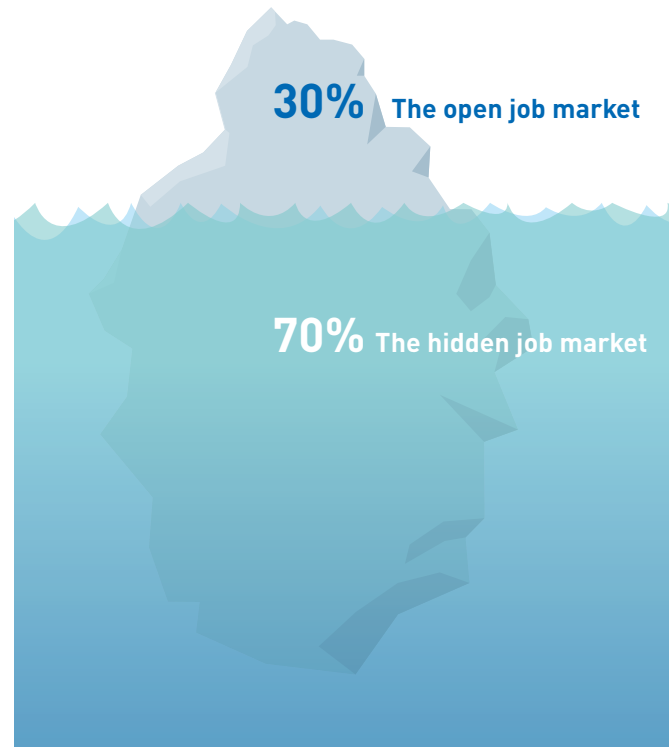


Proactive job search

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

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

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



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

NB:

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

Job advertisements

Analysis

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

→ Tips: Job advertisements

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

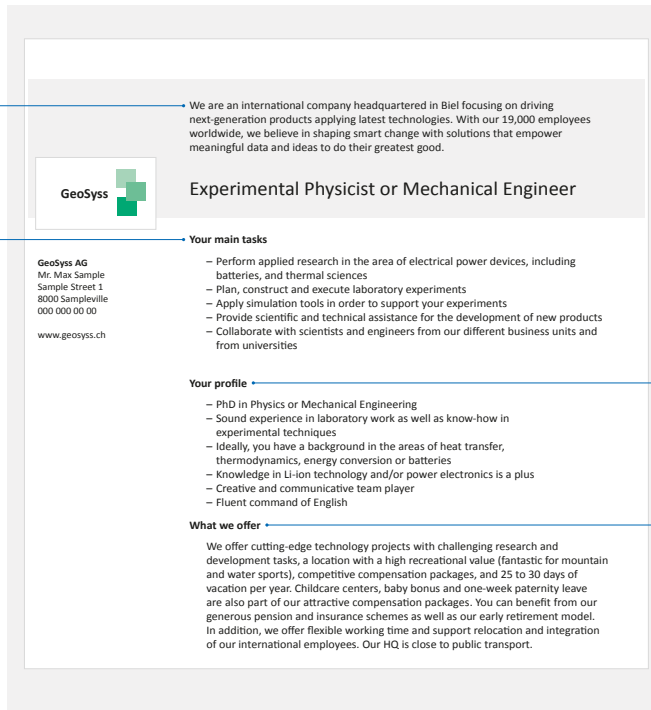
Company description

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

Position description / key areas of responsibility

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





GeoSyss AG
Mr. Max Sample
Sample Street 1
8000 Sampleville
000 000 00 00
www.geosyss.ch

Experimental Physicist or Mechanical Engineer

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

Your main tasks

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

Your profile

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

What we offer

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

Professional qualifications / required experience / desired skills

Must-have requirements

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

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

Can-have requirements

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

Offer

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

Required key competencies

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

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

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



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

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

Summary

The building blocks for your application

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

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

| My favourite companies | Activities |
|------------------------------|---|
| <i>e.g. Helbling Technik</i> | <i>Participate in the Helbling "Active Career Event" 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> |
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→ Tips: Focusing

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

→ ETH Career Center offering: Focusing

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

Information

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



4 — APPLICATION

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Application documents

Your business card

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

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

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

- HR managers often receive 50 or more applications for an advertised position, but just five to ten applicants are invited to a first interview.
- In the first selection round, HR managers' top priority is usually to assess the CV. They get so many applications that they often have just one to three minutes to devote to each. The CV has to be very persuasive for the other documents to be considered at all. It provides the evidence proving you are an applicant who meets the job's requirements.

- Employers want to fill vacancies with candidates who have the required job skills as well as the personality and motivation to fit in with the company and team. As the selection process progresses, the focus will gradually shift towards personality and motivation, placing less emphasis on technical qualifications. In the end, it is usually the chemistry between the future supervisor and the applicant that decides who will get the job.



Scope

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

- The cover letter
- A resume or CV
- Copies of school and university certificates (school-leaving onward)
- Copies of all references, confirmations of employment and letters of recommendation mentioned in the CV
- Copies of training certificates and the like, if relevant to the job



Curriculum vitae

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

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

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

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

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





Source: Eye Tracking Online Metacognition: Cognitive Complexity and Recruiter Decision Making. Will Evans, Head of User Experience Design, Ladders Inc., 2012; www.theladders.com.

So be sure to bear the following in mind when drafting your CV:

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

The standard practice is to structure the CV by topics. The following topics and sections are key components of a CV:

- Contact details
- Personal information
- Education
- Work experience
- Language skills
- Computer skills
- Hobbies/interests
- References

You can add the following sections to your CV to reflect your background:

- Military service
- Further education
- Laboratory skills/methods
- Extracurricular activities
- Scholarships/honours
- Two or three select publications

Please note that these are recommendations for Swiss CVs. Some other countries have different rules (see the section entitled *Application → Applying abroad*).





Sample CV – MSc and BSc

Contact details

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

Photograph

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

Personal information

- Date of birth
- Nationality: Indicate all citizenships (e.g. Switzerland / France).
- If you have a work permit, mention it.

Isabella Bernasconi

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



02.05.1996
Swiss / Italian

EDUCATION

- 10.2019 – 09.2021 **ETH Zurich, Master studies in Mechanical Engineering**
Major: Power-engineering, fluid mechanics
Minor: Data analysis, modeling
Master thesis: «Aero-Thermo-Mechanical System Integration and Design of an Axial Compressor in a High Altitude Airship»
- 10.2016 – 09.2019 **ETH Zurich, BSc in Mechanical Engineering**
Major: Robotics and intelligent systems
Bachelor thesis: «Numerical Simulation of Unsteady Separated Two-Dimensional Flow around a Circular Cylinder»
- 09.2016 **Alte Kantonsschule Aarau, High school diploma (Matura)**
Major: Mathematics and physics

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

- 10.2019 – 09.2020 **ETH Zürich, Laboratory for Energy Conversion (LEC): Teaching Assistant**
– Design and planning of system integration project for new components for the free-space laboratory
– Installation work on the free-space laboratory
– FRAP probes calibration
- 06.2019 – 10.2019 **Limmat Scientific AG, Zurich: Intern**
– Developed the measurement system for the whole probe free-jet calibration device and upgraded the data acquisition hardware
– Programmed LABview 8.0 and tested calibration
– Did measurements and aerodynamic calibration of perforated probes
– Created a technical instruction manual
- 10.2017 – ongoing **Media Markt Schweiz AG, Spreitenbach: Multimedia Sales Person**
– Customer service and sales
- 07.2014 – ongoing **Good News Productions AG, Glattpburg: 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



Daniel Kaufmann

02.05.1996
Swiss citizen
Aargenstrasse 47, CH - 8810 Horgen
+41 79 012 34 56
d.kaufmann@muster.com

EDUCATION

- 08/2016 – 09/2020 **Dr. sc. Laboratory of Computational Science and Engineering, ETH Zurich**
Thesis title: «Investigations of Numerical Aberrations: Origins and Implications»
- 09/2014 – 07/2016 **MSc in Computational Science and Engineering, EPF Lausanne**
Final grade 5.25/6
- Master Thesis at Institute for Process Control Engineering, University of Florida (UF), Gainesville FL, USA (01/2016 – 07/2016)**
- Modeling and model validation for a small articulated robot
 - Developing a modern predictive control algorithm using Matlab/LabVIEW
 - Successful implementation of algorithm on a real vehicle
- Diploma Thesis, Grade 5.5/6
- 09/2011 – 08/2014 **BSc in Computational Science and Engineering, EPF Lausanne**
Final Grade 5.15/6
- Carnegie Mellon University (CMU), Pittsburgh PA, USA (08/2013 – 02/2014)**
Electrical Engineering, Exchange program
Grade Point Average 3.9/4.0, on Dean's List
- 06/2010 **Highschool diploma (Maturité Gymnasiale), Lycée-Colège 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/dSpice
 - Teaching assistant for robust control and control experiments
 - Supervised students writing semester theses
 - Publishes research results, did presentations to management, attended conferences

Doctorate

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

Military service

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

Methods

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

Publications & conferences

- Specify just a few select publications rather than a complete list.



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

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

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

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

MILITARY SERVICE

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

LANGUAGES

| | |
|---------|--------------------|
| German | Mother Tongue |
| English | Proficient |
| French | Proficient |
| Italian | Advanced knowledge |

TECHNIQUES

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

COMPUTER SKILLS

Pascal, C, LaTeX, MS-Office

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

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

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

07/2014 **Workshop "Go Digital!", McKinsey & Company, Zurich, Switzerland**

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

SELECT PUBLICATIONS

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

HOBBIES

Mountaineering, Sailing, Scuba Diving, Reading

REFERENCES

Available upon request

Main differences

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

| Bachelor / master students | Doctoral students |
|--|--|
| – CV max. 2 pages | – CV max. 3 pages |
| – List the master thesis under “Education”. The exception is an external master thesis pursued at a company. In this case, you can give the title of the paper under “Education” and the details of the research conducted at the company under “Work experience”. | – List the doctorate under both “Education” and “Work experience”. You can list the title or topic under “Education” and the details of the research, project management, teaching, etc., under “Work experience”. |
| – Do not list publications unless the master thesis was published in a journal or the like. | – List titles of select publications in the CV if relevant to the position (max. 3). |

Main differences in CVs for applications in industry and academia

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



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your application.



Ramzy S.
MSc ETH Masch.-Ing.

> www.eth-gethired.ch

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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**
Nellenstrasse 231
CH-8245 Feuerthalen
Phone: +41 52 367 63 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 definiebas quo, ius graeci laboramus honestatis, id ius nullam soluta partiendo. Duo te corpora prodesset positionum velit doctus an quo, id inani clita. No usu saperet appareat probatus, usu ipsum intellegebat ex.

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

Section 3: Cu possit fienter intellegebat qui. Mei in vocent definiebas, cu assum convenire necessitatibus has. Vis verear quaestio accommodare no, id vis repudiare didde. Et quo vidit dicam dolore, in sed velit eripuit pertinax. Eam ea didcat zzril, quo aeterno comprehensum cu, his in enim vocent definiebas. 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 definiebas quo, ius graeci laboramus honestatis, id ius nullam soluta partiendo. Duo te corpora prodesset posidonium 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 takmata, 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 salutat cu mei. Qui ut illum partem. Cu prima idque aperiri mei, sed modo interpretaris ut. Sea dicta eloqueniam id, ea cum.

Section 3: Cu possit ferebat intellegebat qui. Mei in vocent definiebas, cu assum convenire necessitatibus has. Vis venerat quaestio accommodare no, id vis repudiare dide. Et quo vidit dicam dolore, in sed velit eripuit pertinax. Eam ea dicat zzril, quo aeterno comprehensam cu, his in enim vocent definiebas. 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 and Xing social media profiles of the target company's employees are also good sources of keywords. They can also be found in the job and task descriptions.

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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://gecd.mit.edu/resources/career-handbook>.





Interview

How you present yourself

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

Different types of interviews

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

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

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

Most questions in **semi-structured interviews** are scripted, but their order may be changed and questions may be omitted and added during the interview. Most job interviews follow this pattern. If your interviewer asks scripted questions, but also responds to your answers and occasionally follows up on your answers, than this is a semi-structured session.





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

Screening or pre-screening interviews

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

Phone interview

Keep the following in mind for a phone interview:

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



Video-Interview

A video interview usually consists of a set of pre-recorded questions for you to answer using your computer's camera and microphone. It can also be a live interview via Zoom or similar software. In addition to the points made above, keep the following in mind for a video interview:

- Dress appropriately as you would for a face-to-face interview.
- Pick a quiet, neutral spot where you will not be disturbed. Places like your shared kitchen are not the best choice; the interviewer may well be distracted by the environment.
- Make sure you have a good internet connection and try your webcam and microphone beforehand to confirm that they work.
- Rather than staring at your tabletop or studying your notes, look into the camera during the interview or when answering questions. During a live interview, try to maintain eye contact with the interviewer.
- Choose a professional background (no private things you don't want to show) and make sure, if you use an electronic background, that it is serious and won't cause disruption.

Technical interviews and questions

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

Competency based interviews and questions

The premise for this interview method is that a past behaviour is an indicator of a candidate's future conduct. These questions address competencies that are essential to the advertised job and ask for specific examples. The interviewer may ask you something like, "Describe a situation where you had to make a difficult decision that turned out to be wrong."

To answer these questions well, you should prepare examples of all the required competencies set out in the job description. Use the STAR method to do this (see the chapter entitled [Analysis → What am I good at? – STAR method](#)).

Situational interviews/questions

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

Stress interviews and questions

Rare in Switzerland, this interview technique is usually only used for high-pressure, very stressful jobs. However, interviewers may want to see how you deal with pressure and stress. To this end, they could ask you a provocative question or put you under pressure in some other way. One technique is to repeatedly interrupt you. It is important to stay calm and focused in these situations and avoid being angry, aggressive or defensive.



Preparation

Always bear in this mind when preparing for an interview: If you are invited to an interview, this company sees you as a viable candidate. Businesses have no time or interest in interviewing applicants who are unsuitable for the position. If you keep this in mind during your preparations, it will affect your attitude and behaviour during the interview. You will start to see interviewers as “allies” who are pursuing the same goal as you. Both sides want a good interview and the best match of requirements, qualifications and expectations.

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

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

Etiquette

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

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

→ Tips: Preparing for the interview

- Prepare the application documents and take a copy of each to the interview, including any certificates or grades that you have yet to add to your application.
- Study the directions, train or bus timetables carefully to ensure you will arrive on time rather than stressed out in a hurried rush.
- Bring a pad and pen to take notes during the conversation.
- Note the company's and your contact person's phone numbers for use in the event of emergency.





The sequence and potential questions

There are no fixed procedural rules for interviews. However, you can expect most HR managers to prefer a structured or semi-structured discussion.

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

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

Warming up

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

More on the company and job

Your interviewer will usually describe the company and the position to be filled before the questions start. Listen attentively and show you are interested. If you have any questions, make a note and address them at the end of the interview or ask politely if you may raise them immediately.





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Your turn to present yourself

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

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

Below are some typical questions you should be prepared for.

Background

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

Motives

- Why did you apply for a job with us? What do you know about our company?
- Do you have any special connection with our company or products?
- What interests you particularly about this job?



Motivation

- Why should we employ you rather than someone else?
- What achievements are you particularly proud of?
- What has priority for you at work?
- Have you ever been dissatisfied with your performance and how did you deal with it?
- If you got the job, what would you do in the first 30 days?
- Where do you want to be in five year's time?

Personal and social background

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

Professional skills and inclinations

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

Challenges

- Why is there a gap in your CV?
- Why is the grade for your bachelor's degree so poor?
- You realise that it is impossible to meet the deadline for a job because members of your team are not reliable. What do you do?
- If I were your boss and I asked you to do something you had reservations about, what would you do?
- Do you have other applications currently under consideration?

Competency-based questions

- Describe a situation in which you had to work in a team.
- Tell me about a situation in which you had to assert yourself.
- Can you give me an example of where you had to explain something complicated to another person in easily understood terms?

Situational and hypothetical questions

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

Exploring the details of the job

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

Applicant's questions

At this stage of the interview, you will be given the opportunity to ask any questions you may still have. This is your cue to take out the notepad with the questions you prepared earlier and demonstrate that you did your homework for this interview. You may ask any product-related, job-related or technical questions that were not answered earlier in the interview. Salary is a topic best left to the company representatives to bring up. Be prepared to give an annual salary range when asked about your expectations.



Examples of an applicant's questions

- How does the department fit into the overall organization?
- What departments will I be working with?
- What is the average seniority and educational background of my prospective colleagues?
- How will I be on-boarded?
- What other projects do you have planned?
- May I ask you how long you have been with the company and how you would describe your experience?
- Can you tell me something about your corporate and management culture?
- What do you expect of me in the first three months?
- Would it be possible to see the prospective workplace and meet team members?
- What further training programs do you offer?
- What are the next steps? Will there be further interviews?
- By when can I expect to hear from you?

Discussing contract terms

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

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

If any of this goes unmentioned, it is best not to bring it up. Often these talking points – and the salary, especially – are not discussed in detail until you have been selected as a candidate for the position.

Wrapping up the interview

First impressions count; last impressions last. Be as mindful about your conduct at the end of the interview as you were at the beginning. It is important to arrange the next steps, particularly who calls who. If this is not clear, ask which of you will be getting in touch. Thank your interviewers for the interesting discussion and for their time.

→ Tips: Things to do throughout the interview

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



Body language

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

Smile

Try to smile even if you are nervous. This demonstrates a friendly, open attitude that can have positive impact on the course of the conversation.

Posture

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

Handshake

Greet your counterpart with a confident, firm handshake.



Eye contact

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

Voice

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

Companies' assessment criteria

Applicants never see what goes on behind the scenes of the selection process and are often left in the dark about what makes or breaks an interview. All you can do is give it your very best; the final decision will inevitably be based on an aggregate of impressions.

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

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



→ Tips: What to do after the interview

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

Starting salaries

Differences by industry, company and position

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

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

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

→ Example A

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

→ Example B

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



There are all kinds of statistics about starting salaries to be had, but these should serve merely as indicators. You can find them on the ETH website (Studies/Bachelor/Advice/Comparing degree programs), at Swissengineering, Swiss ICT and so on.

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

Alternative selection procedures

Tests and assessment centers

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

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

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



Assessment criteria

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

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

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

→ Tips: Preparing assessments using online resources

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

→ Case studies

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

→ Assessment centers

<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.

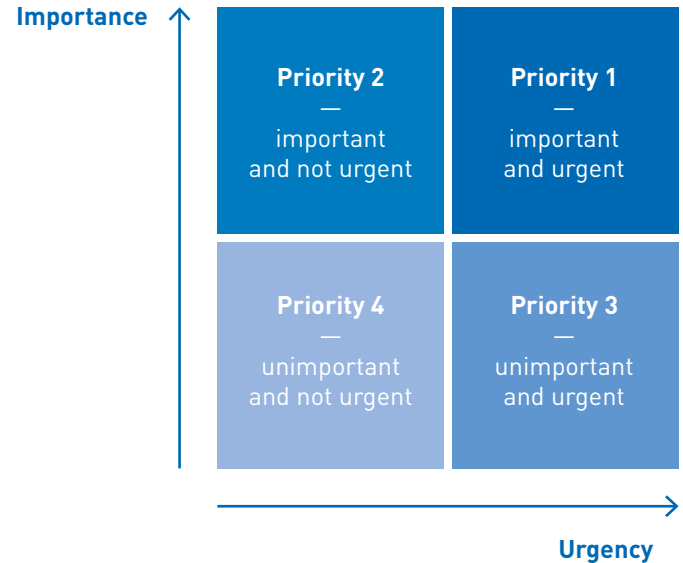
→ Tips: Case studies

- 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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