

Apply

Every company will sooner or later require a written application. There are clear rules as to how a job application file should look like and what it should contain. You can ask your teachers at school or the career-counselling professionals how a job application file should look like, and you can get help when you have problems with this. In the Internet you can find supporting documents for your application as well³. It is important that you show your job application file to a qualified person before you send it to a company, as it has to be complete and correct and should be appropriate for the job and the company. Another tip: apply if possible to several places at the same time. You will increase your chances of getting an apprenticeship.

Remember the overall picture

It is sensible to keep control over all your application activities. It is best for you to have a list for this purpose on which you note to whom you have applied, if an appointment has been made and by what date you should have received an answer. Alternatively, you can use a career-choice plLauraer (obtainable from the BIZ). In this way you will always know what has been done, from whom you still expect a reply and when you may follow it up.

Master those examinations and interviews

More and more companies and organisations conduct their own examinations. Find out how it is in your chosen field and what is required. If you succeed in reaching the last few applicants, you will get to know the boss personally. Prepare yourself for the introductory interview. Think about possible questions and answers in advance. If you are unsure, practise it with somebody. The personal impression you make at this meeting plays an important role. Sell yourself! Show your interest and motivation.

Cope with rejections

The apprenticeship situation in many branches is difficult. You must therefore be prepared to have your applications rejected. Do not in any way become discouraged. Keep at it and continue your efforts just the same. Find out the grounds for your rejections. Possibly in future you can improve in some way and thereby increase your chances of success.

Stay flexible

Do not stick obstinately to a single job idea. Perhaps you will not find an apprenticeship in your chosen field. Then it is important for you to remain open to other solutions.

If in spite of all your efforts over a lengthy period of time the hoped-for apprenticeship does not materialise, it is necessary to carefully analyse the situation. Consider the possibility of a basic training in a similar kind of job, taking a gap year, getting some practical work experience, having a language-learning year etc. React in good time and obtain the relevant information or the necessary assistance. In any case, discuss it with your careers adviser and plan your next procedure. The completion of a basic training (or further education) is an important foundation for your future and offers you various possibilities to develop.

SDBB | CSFO – 2011

³ In German-speaking Switzerland
In French-speaking Switzerland

www.berufsberatung.ch >Berufswahl >Lehrstellensuche >Bewerbung
www.orientation.ch >formation >Toutes des places d'apprentissages
>Lettre et CV
orientamento.ch > scelta professionale > Borsa nazionale dei posti di
tirocinio >Consigli per la ricerca

From school to job

Information for Parents

Dear Parents

You have a daughter or a son in the 7th, 8th, 9th or 10th class (Harmos: 9th, 10th, 11th or 12th class). Your son or your daughter must now decide on a job or a school for further education. This is an important step: With a finished education in a job or with qualifications of a school for further education, young people in Switzerland have a good basis for their further development in the professional life.

How does the school help?

The school prepares students from the 8th and 9th classes (Harmos: 10th and 11th classes), for the choice of a job or a school for further education. Ask your teachers, for example at a parents evening, how this preparation exactly looks like.

How does career counselling help¹?

Career counselling centres provide information about professions and further training possibilities. Moreover, you can arrange personal interviews to discuss your interests, talents and professional options. This offer is free and confidential for students.

School and career guidance assist young people in the choice of a profession or a school of further education, if necessary, also in finding an apprenticeship. However, the responsibility together with the principal work remains with the concerned family.

What must young people do for themselves? How can you help your child?

Your son or daughter must do a lot on his or her own, until he or she finds a place for further education after the 9th or 10th class (Harmos: 11th or 12th class). For many, this is difficult. It is therefore very important for mothers and fathers to help their children. If you have questions and do not know what to do anymore, please contact the career-counselling centre.

Choosing a profession or a school of further education is a process, during which young people should ask questions and find the right answers to them. This process needs time. The most important questions and the most important ways to get the answers are described in the following:

A Get to know yourself

Your children have to ask themselves:

- What am I good at in school? Which subjects do I like?

1

Each canton has at least one career counselling centre. The addresses can be found at your school, commune or under:

German: www.adressen.sdbb.ch

French: www.adresses.csfo.ch

Italian: www.indirizzi.csfo.ch

The career counselling centre is often better-known under a particular name or abbreviation:

In German-speaking Switzerland

BIZ, Laufbahnzentrum

In French-speaking Switzerland

OP, SOPFA, OFPC, COS, OROSP, CIO, OCOSP

In Italian-speaking Switzerland

orientamento, UOSP

- What have I learnt in my spare time or from my family? (e.g. to speak other languages, to clean, to cook, to shop, to repair something, to listen to my friends when they have problems, to help in a sports club, in a youth group or in another club when there is a celebration.)
- Did I prove in an extra job, that I am on time and reliable? (e.g. when delivering newspapers, looking after children, mowing the lawn, helping out in a company during 2-3 hours a week)
- Where are my strengths? What weak points do I have?

How can you help your child as parents?

- Together with your daughter or son, try to find out, what activities could suit her or him, and what strengths she or he has.

B Get to know jobs

Your child gets to know professions thanks to information and „Schnupperlehren“ (brief work placement in a company, where your child gets a taste of the profession)²

- Getting to know jobs means informing oneself: Read job descriptions, watch films about professions, attend information events³ and job and further education fairs⁴, talk to the career counselling professionals
- Do a “Schnupperlehre” and get some practical work experience. During a “Schnupperlehre”, one gets to know a profession in a company better. Such a “Schnupperlehre” usually lasts 2 to 3 days. Companies also often use these “Schnupperlehre” as a selection tool: they want to get to know youngsters. Whoever makes a good impression during a “Schnupperlehre” has a better chance of getting an apprenticeship in that company.

How can you help your children as parents?

- If possible, accompany your daughter or son to information events. Help your child to remember the dates of information events.
- Accompany your daughter or son to a career-counselling centre. Obtain information about the education and apprenticeship possibilities in Switzerland.
- Talk to your daughter or son about her or his experiences during the “Schnupperlehren”.

C Choose a job or school

During the process of choosing a job or school your children must pay attention to the following:

- Choosing a job or a school for further education needs time for consideration and time for undertaking various activities.

²

German	Schnupperlehre
French	stage d'information professionnelle; stage en entreprises
Italian	stages

³ Information events:

In German-speaking Switzerland	www.berufsberatung.ch >Berufswahl >Informationsveranstaltungen
In French-speaking Switzerland and Italian-speaking Switzerland	Ask the career counselling professionals or the teachers at school, what information events there are.

⁴ Job and further education fairs:

Ask the career counselling professionals or your teachers at school, when and where there are job and further education fairs. These fairs have the following names:

German	Berufsmesse, Ausbildungsmesse, Berufsschau
French	Salon des métiers, Cité des métiers, salon de la formation
Italian	ESPOProfessionisti

Englisch	Von der Schule zum Beruf	www.berufsberatung.ch/migration
Anglais	De l'école au monde professionnel	www.orientation.ch/migration
Inglese	Dalla scuola al mondo professionale	www.orientamento.ch/migrazione

- When choosing an appropriate career or a school of further education, it is important to keep 1-2 alternatives in reserve.
- Ask your teachers: “Where do I have knowledge gaps? How can I prepare myself at school for further education after the 9th or 10th class (Harmos: 11th or 12th class)?”

How can you help your child as parents?

- Take an interest in this decision-making process.
- Discuss the chosen career and appropriate alternatives with your child.

D Look for a place for further education (generally in the autumn of the 9th class [Harmos: 11th class])

When looking for a place for further education, the following leaflet can help your child:

- “Looking for an apprenticeship: How do you best proceed?”⁵

How can you help your child as parents?

- Help your daughter or son to start looking for an apprenticeship early enough.
- After negative replies, encourage your daughter or son to keep looking for a job.

You can now find out from examples what mothers and fathers can do.

Speak to the teacher

Laura is in the 8th class (Harmos: 10th class). At home she never talks about choosing a job or school for further education. “What is the matter”, her parents ask. Her mother goes to the school and asks the teacher if Laura has also not shown any interest in the choice of a job or a school.

Stay aware of the different possibilities

Achmed is in the 9th class (Harmos: 11th class). Like many other youngsters, he wants to be an information technologist. He applies for apprenticeships but only receives negative replies. At a parents' evening, his parents learn there are too few apprenticeships in information technology. They tell Achmed he should contact the career-counselling centre for a personal discussion. Achmed comes home with a new idea. As he is good at mathematics and is interested in technology, he now looks for an apprenticeship as a poly-mechanic. He knows now that in this job he will also have something to do with computers. If he wants, he can specialise in information technology after completing his apprenticeship.

The family has expectations

“When does Nicholas start his studies?” ask relatives at home in the village. “In Switzerland many things are different to what you think”, reply Nicholas's parents. “Nicholas is good with his hands and likes cars. As he is a very good student too, he also finishes the demanding four-year basic training. He will become an automobile mechanic. That is a good training and the job will suit him. We are proud of our son who has achieved so much. Anyway, it is not so easy attending school when you speak a different language.” As a car mechanic, Nicholas can find work anywhere in the world!

Insufficient language knowledge

Jennifer is a very intelligent girl. But as she only came to Switzerland when she was 15, she does not understand the language in school sufficiently for a demanding training. Jennifer and her parents learn

⁵ www.berufsberatung.ch >Berufswahl >Information für Fremdsprachige
www.orientation.ch >Choix professionnelle >Informations en langues étrangères
www.orientamento.ch >Scelta professionale >Informazioni per persone di lingua straniera

that after obligatory schooling Jennifer can do a preparatory school year to prepare for a job, or she can prepare for an apprenticeship or do a two-year basic professional training. For Jennifer and her parents everything is unfamiliar. They must first get to know the possibilities in detail. Jennifer is also disappointed. She had dreamt of going to gymnasium. Her parents console her: "Perhaps you need more time than others. As soon as you have done enough work to cover the gaps in your knowledge, then you can do a more demanding basic job training and possibly you can study later. You will manage it!"

Job or marriage?

Samira will soon be 16. A young man comes visiting. He asks her father: "May I marry Samira?" Her father replies: "Our families are close. According to our tradition, a marriage between Samira and you would be appropriate. But you know we live in Switzerland. Life is different here. Here it is very important for men and women to have a job. So Samira must first train for a job. Later she can decide for herself if she wants to get married."

A father accompanies his son

David is in the 9th class. Learning is difficult for him. He can do a brief trial apprenticeship ("Schnupperlehre") as a carpenter's assistant. He knows that in a carpentry company he can do a two-year basic training, if the preliminary trial work placement is satisfactory. So he is quite nervous. He also feels uncertain because he does not know the way very well and yet he wants to be punctual. His father encourages him: "You already know a lot about this job. You try very hard. On the first day I will come with you to the entrance of the firm. We will leave home early enough. If we have enough time, we can even walk about a bit. That helps when one is nervous!"

Use your contacts

Jane is a good student. She has excellent marks in French, German and mathematics. In addition, she can speak, read and write English. She considers various jobs, goes to information events and gets some brief work experience. It is now clear she wants to do a commercial apprenticeship. She sends off many applications but only receives negative replies. Her father works in a building firm and tells his boss that his daughter is looking for an apprenticeship. "Ask our office. They also take trainees," says the boss. "I will do that. My wife can also ask in the hospital where she works. Haven't we also got a neighbour who can perhaps help us?" thinks her father.

Don't give up!

Again Mehmet has received a negative reply to his application as a retail employee. He has already sent many applications to different companies, but so far, he was not successful. More and more often, Mehmet forgets to look for new apprenticeships or to send applications to companies. Somehow, he has lost courage. In the evening at dinner with his family, his parents encourage him: "We will accompany you to the career counselling centre. There we can obtain information, what you can do and what help you can receive. Don't give up! You can achieve something and we help you."

Dear Parents,

If you have questions about your daughter's or your son's choice of job, waste no time. Ask the teacher or the career-counselling centre.

Ways to a Job and Education in Switzerland

Information for adults living in Switzerland

Did you have your schooling and further education abroad and are you now looking for work in Switzerland? Or would you like some additional training in Switzerland? Then you will find some important information for you in this leaflet, which should help you with the first steps towards a job or the possibility of further education.

„Parlez-vous français?“ „Sprechen Sie Deutsch?“ „Parla italiano?“

Whether you are looking for a job or would like some further education, one of the most important requirements is knowledge of the local national language¹. If you live in a German-speaking area, start with High German! That way you will have a good basis for understanding Swiss German later – or even speaking it.

For a temporary job, it might be sufficient to understand the relevant language and speak a little of it. However, even for temporary work, the ability to read and write a little are increasingly expected and for more demanding jobs, you should definitely have a much better language knowledge. For further education or studying at a university or college, you must be able to read and understand complicated texts and be able to write texts on your own. Depending on your aim, therefore, you need to be capable of various degrees of skill. For this reason it is important for you to find out which language standard is necessary for you to achieve your goal.

Furthermore, language is not only important for a job or further education in Switzerland. Language knowledge is also very useful in other real-life situations, for example when talking to neighbours, shopping, talk about your children with teachers, talking to a doctor, filling out forms, getting in contact with government offices and authorities etc. Then, if in the future you would like to (or have to) find another job you will already have taken the first important step!

A summary of language courses can be found in the Internet.² Additional information in connection with language courses can also be obtained from the career counselling centre. Information regarding the career counselling centre can be found on the last page of this leaflet.

Tips for Job-Hunting

When looking for a job, not only your language skills play an important role, but also what kind of education, how much job experience or what kind of permit you possess. However, depending on the economic situation, it can be very difficult to find a job in Switzerland, particularly if you have never worked in Switzerland before. You should therefore use every opportunity to obtain work experience in Switzerland, for example through practical work, or a job for which you might perhaps be overqualified. Possibly you can change to a better job in the same firm later, or thanks to the practical work, you might be given a good reference with which you would have a better chance with your job applications later! Voluntary work can also be a good opportunity to gain work experience and to get to know people who perhaps could help you with future job-hunting.

Tell your relatives, friends and acquaintances that you are looking for a job. By chance, perhaps there is a job vacancy in one of their firms? Or these friends know someone who knows of a job vacancy?

¹ Switzerland has four national languages: German, French, Italian and Romansch

²

Language courses in the internet:	Deutsch	www.berufsberatung.ch/weiterbildung
	Français	www.orientation.ch/perfectionnement
	Italiano	www.orientamento.ch/perfezionamento

You can find a job thanks to advertisements in a newspaper, in the internet or by contacting a business directly. Furthermore, the Regional Job Centre³ can also help you to look for a job.

Acknowledgement of Foreign Diplomas

Did you have any further education resulting in a diploma or certificate in your country of origin? You can have it verified so that you know what level it holds within the Swiss education system. If it is a diploma in a regulated professional activity, then it has to be recognized as equivalent when you want to work in this profession. For qualifications in unregulated professional activities, the Federal Government Information Office recommends level certificates, as you do not need a recognition of your foreign qualifications to work in Switzerland. However, it is up to the job market and to employers only, whether a job candidate with or without equivalent education is taken into consideration or not. A level certificate of the OPET is very useful for public authorities, education institutions and potential employers as it provides information about the level of the foreign qualification within the Swiss education system.

Again, recognition certificates or level certificates do not guarantee that you find a job in your profession, especially if you do not have yet experience in Switzerland.

Nevertheless, such certificates are an important step. Maybe you can also do continuing training in order to obtain a Swiss diploma in your profession.

Get in touch with the Federal Government Information Office⁴ Here you will learn how to proceed.

Paths to a Profession or University Education in Switzerland

In Switzerland the way to a particular profession can be quite different to that in your country of origin. Here, only a small proportion of professions require a high school followed by university education. Most young Swiss learn their profession following obligatory schooling by an apprenticeship, which is now known as basic professional training. They study for 3-4 years. The training is both practical and theoretical. There are about 250 professions in Switzerland which one can learn after obligatory schooling. For these professions there are many good courses and further education. Only a few young people go on to high school or university. How does one study for a profession in Switzerland? Find it out. In that way you will discover what possibilities you have if you wish to continue to study or train and in which field you can look for a job.

The brochure „Was nach der Schule?“ provides a good summary of the educational system in Switzerland. The booklet is available in many different languages and can usually be found in your career counselling centre.

Completion of Professional Training for Adults

There are various possibilities for adults to complete their professional training. Information can be obtained from the career counselling centre.

3

German-speaking Switzerland: Regionales Arbeitsvermittlungszentrum (RAV); www.treffpunkt-arbeit.ch
French-speaking Switzerland: Office régional de placement (ORP); www.espace-emploi.ch
Italian-speaking Switzerland: Ufficio regionale di collocamento (URC); www.area-lavoro.ch

4

www.sbf.admin.ch >English >Recognition of foreign qualifications
>Deutsch >Anerkennung ausländischer Diplome
>Français >Reconnaissance de diplômes étrangers
>Italiano >Riconoscimento dei diplomi esteri

Englisch	Wege zu Arbeit und Bildung in der Schweiz	www.berufsberatung.ch/migration
Anglais	Premiers pas vers le monde du travail et de la formation en Suisse	www.orientation.ch/migration
Inglese	Il sistema del mondo del lavoro e della formazione in Svizzera	www.orientamento.ch/migrazione

Financing University or other kinds of Further Education

If you are interested in some kind of further education or a university course, you should also consider the financial aspects! Most students in Switzerland are supported by their parents or they work in addition to their studies in order to finance their further education or university course themselves. It is only under very particular circumstances that educational grants are available⁵.

Various Opportunities provided by the Career Counselling Centre⁶

You should visit the career counselling centre if you wish to find out about the possible ways to further education or think about your professional future in Switzerland thoroughly.

At this centre you will find information on all kinds of further education and professions. The career counselling centres have an Infothek at their disposal. The Infothek functions like a library. You can go there during opening hours without an appointment, find out about various professions or further education and, as a rule, borrow relevant material. At the Infothek there are many other leaflets and data on all kinds of subjects as well as addresses of advisory bureaux in your area. This data is in the local national language. Very little information is translated into other languages!

If you cannot get any further on your own in the Infothek, you can register for a personal interview in which you can discuss your situation with one of the professionals (register in the Infothek or by telephone). This discussion takes place in the local national language (other languages on request). The career counselling centre does not handle job vacancies, but you can discuss career possibilities or look for new ideas with a professional. With the help of the adviser you can plan your way for a suitable job or further education.

Access to work and education in Switzerland requires a lot of patience and tenacity from you!

On this way, we wish you all the best and every success.

5

Additional information about educational grants are available in career counselling centres or in the internet:

In German-speaking Switzerland	berufsberatung.ch >Laufbahn >Tipps für die Laufbahnplanung >Finanzierung der Weiterbildung
In French-speaking Switzerland	orientation.ch >Formation >Financer sa formation
In Italian-speaking Switzerland	orientamento.ch >Formazioni >Finanzare la propria formazione

6

Each canton has at least one career counselling centre.

Addresses are obtainable from your school, your commune or in the internet:

Deutsch: www.adressen.sdbb.ch Français: www.adresses.csfo.ch Italiano: www.indirizzi.csfo.ch

Vocational guidance centres are often known by special names or an abbreviation:

In German-speaking Switzerland	BIZ, Laufbahnzentrum
In French-speaking Switzerland	OP, SOPFA, OFPC, COS, OROSP, CIO, OCOSP
In Italian-speaking Switzerland	orientamento, UOSP

