

Looking for an apprenticeship: How do you best proceed?

Clarify job goals

If you are looking for an apprenticeship, your choice of the type of job should be decided. In other words, you know that you have the necessary qualifications for the chosen job. That is important and allows you to look with a clear goal and not just grab the best possible trainee job available without a plan.

Collect addresses

Now you can establish from experience which companies are offering an apprenticeship for next summer in your chosen field:

- In the career-counselling centre ¹ you can learn where you will find lists of companies, which may train apprentices in the sought-after field.
- Available apprenticeships can be found in the Internet.²
- In daily newspapers, in free advertisements or on companies' websites you will find offers of trainee jobs.
- Many students find apprenticeships through relatives or acquaintances. Use all your relationships.

Get in touch

Now you have the relevant addresses. Find out from companies if there really is an apprenticeship available. Use the telephone for this first contact or go there yourself. If the answer is positive, then ask how you should apply. This can vary from company to company. One company may require a written application; another may perhaps like to get to know you personally. In either case, it is important you apply in the form the company requires.

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

¹ Each canton has at least one career-counselling centre. Addresses can be found at your school, commune or under:
Deutsch: www.adressen.sdbb.ch Français: www.adresses.csfo.ch Italiano: 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

² Freie Lehrstellen:

In German-speaking Switzerland	www.berufsberatung.ch/Lehrstellen
In French-speaking Switzerland	www.orientation.ch/apprentissage
In Italian-speaking Switzerland	http://www.orientamento.ch/tirocinio

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.

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In German-speaking Switzerland:

www.berufsberatung.ch > Direkteinstieg Schüler > Lehrstellensuche > Lehrstellenbewerbung

In French-speaking Switzerland:

www.orientation.ch > accès direct > A l'école > Places d'apprentissage > Rechercher une place d'apprentissage

In Italian-speaking Switzerland:

www.orientamento.ch > Accesso diretto > Allievi scuola media > Posti di tironico > Ricerca di un posto di tironico