

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 what you would like to be! 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 firms are offering an apprenticeship for next Summer in your chosen field:

- ▶ In the career counselling centre¹ you can learn where you will find lists of firms which may train apprentices in the sought-after field.
- ▶ Available apprenticeships can be found in the internet.
- ▶ In the daily newspapers and in free advertisements 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 firms 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 business to business. One firm 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 business requires.

Apply

A written application will sooner or later be required by every firm. There are clear rules as to how a written application should be and what it should contain. You have learnt at school or perhaps from your parents how to make a written application. If you are uncertain, obtain the necessary help. For example from the career counselling centre. Here you will be advised and can obtain samples of written applications. A tip: apply if possible to several places at the same time. You will increase your chances of getting an apprenticeship.

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Each canton has at least one career counselling centre.

Addresses can be found at your school, commune or under: www.svb-asosp.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, OSP, OROSP, CIO, CIP, OOFF
In Italian-speaking Switzerland	orientamento, UOSP

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 pLauraer (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 businesses 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 an apprenticeship 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. In this way you come one step closer to your choice of job.