

INTEGRATING IN THE SWISS JOB MARKET

A piece of advice and helpful links

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Diana, owner of SCC SARL, works throughout Switzerland with individuals searching for a job and with multinational companies to support their dual career employees. As a career coach she has over 10 years of experience supporting career continuation and expertise with dual career mobility, supporting the accompanying partner continue their career and integrate into Switzerland. Diana has been a CSCC member since 2008 and is originally from Toronto.



Moving to Switzerland, new to Switzerland or a long term resident? The Swiss job market may appear opaque, fragmented, hidden, silent or simply confusing. I hope to bring here some clarity and understanding so you can better navigate the Swiss job market and ultimately find a job.

How is Switzerland the same as other job markets ... and yet different:

- Jobs are posted on job search boards, company websites, LinkedIn and other online platforms (easy to use before arriving)
- Applications include a CV (personal information, such as date of birth, marital status, number of children, nationality, Swiss work permit, photo are all common but not mandatory) a covering letter (although some no longer require such a letter and most do not read it – at least not at first, it is still part of an application).
- Networking and who you know is key to opening doors (this is difficult if you are new to the area, so you should welcome all networking opportunities)
- Knowing who you are, what you have to offer and who would benefit is invaluable; this requires some introspection, reflection and clear formulation. Frameworks such as the Business Model Canvas, which career coaches often use with clients, can be very helpful.
- Languages are an asset in Switzerland. Jobs that require only English can be found, but French and German, provide greater opportunities depending on the region and the job.
- A Certificate of employment is provided for each job by the employer and requested by potential employers. (This is a Swiss particularity; if you don't have one, you can replicate by requesting a similar letter from your former employer abroad www.ch.ch/fr/certificat-travail/).
- Be overly prepared for the interview. The interview is crucial and in Switzerland depending on the employer there may be several interviews, many people to meet, assessment test to complete, a case study to prepare or more.

Switzerland is your job market if you are prepared to be mobile as it is a small country and different regions offer different opportunities. Zurich is the financial hub where most head offices of banks are located. Basel is the centre for many large pharmaceutical companies. Geneva is home to Private Banks, numerous international organizations, including the headquarters of many agencies of the United Nations and the Red Cross. Lausanne is the sports capital with the headquarters of the International Olympic Committee and museum and a multitude of sports federations.

Not all jobs are created equally.

I have found that it is not easy to cut and paste a job done in a foreign country directly into the Swiss job market. Even though Switzerland relies heavily on foreign labour, the hiring process is not kind to profiles that do not tick the box. That means it is important that your CV and cover letter reflects how your experience, competencies and skills can add value to the job you are applying to. Remember that many job searches are conducted using key words to sort candidates, so the right words are impactful.

Expectations

The Swiss job market is slow and for a foreigner who is new it can be slower. In my experience a year searching for a job is common and the main determining factor is the quality of your network (will they help present you and your CV). Even with an online application, a push of your CV in the right direction can move things along.

Self-employed

Working for yourself can be rewarding and flexible. See the link for information on the legal requirements. www.ch.ch/en/becoming-self-employed/

Switzerland is open to entrepreneurs and you can begin as an independent ("sole trader") once you have 3 or more clients and register with a Caisse AVS, your commune can help direct you. You can also use a portage salarial, which is a company that manages payment of a salary to you while invoicing your clients.

www.travailler-en-suisse.ch/portage-salarial-suisse.html

The upside

Working in Switzerland can be very rewarding. Continuing your career in Switzerland will support your families transition by providing financial support to your family, integrating within the local area, learning or improving language skills, working in a multi-cultural environment. And let's not forget the 4-week minimum holiday allocation and that Switzerland is central allowing for great holidays nearby.

Additional information

- Do you need your foreign diplomas recognised by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI)? This is most applicable for the Health sector.
- Have you contacted the Regional Employment Centre (RAV) in your canton? The State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) oversees these public employment offices nationally, and supports the job search process.
- Information on working in Switzerland as a foreigner:
www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/home/entry-switzerland-residence/residence-switzerland/working-switzerland.html
- State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) has additional information and resources.

WHO CAN HELP?

Placement agencies and job search sites:

[LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com) – www.jobs.ch – www.jobscout24.ch
www.ge.ch/acceder-milliers-offres-emploi-ligne/agences-placement
www.coople.com/ch/fr/
www.cagi.ch/fr/service-ong/bourse-d-emploi-ong.php

Companies' websites, Career section

This webpage of the Canton of Geneva provides an elaborate list of all job search sites: <https://www.ge.ch/acceder-milliers-offres-emploi-ligne/job-boards-moteurs-recherches>

Networking groups – some links

<https://canswiss.ch/en/> –
<https://zurichnetworkinggroup.com/>
<http://www.executives-int.ch/>
www.cwf.ch Career Women's Forum
<http://zurich.impacthub.net/>
<http://geneva.impacthub.net/>
www.jci-centralswitzerland.ch/
www.greaterzuricharea.ch/content/01/01_001_de.asp
www.professionalwomensgroup.com/
www.eventbrite.ca/d/switzerland/networking/

Get help from the unemployment agencies if you have been working in Switzerland

<https://www.ch.ch/en/unemployment/>
www.ge.ch/inscrire-au-chomage/conditions-inscrire
www.vd.ch/themes/economie/demandeurs-demploi/

Work with a career coach or a professional coach

www.scc-centre.com/
www.coachfederation.ch/find-a-coach/search-for-local-coach.html

