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BEYOND THE DOCTORATE

Career Development for Doctoral
and Postdoctoral Researchers

2023 Guide
unil.ch/graduatecampus

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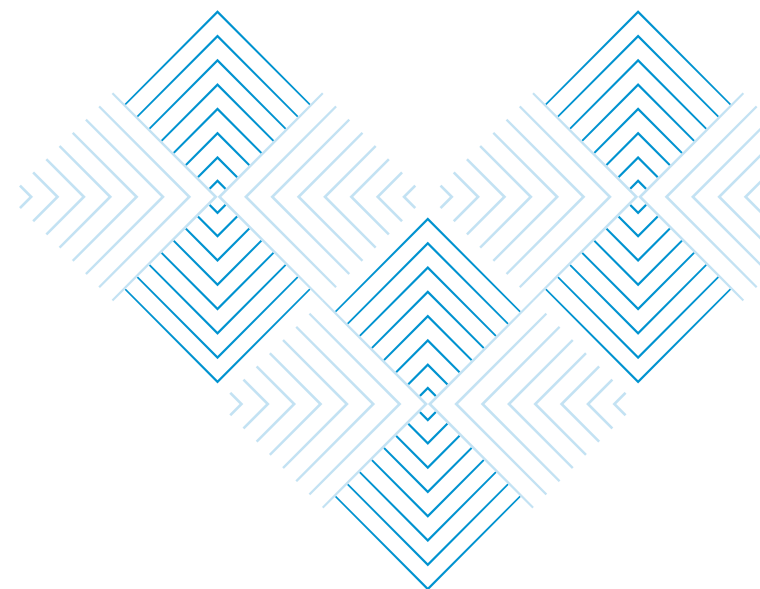
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AT THE END OF YOUR DOCTORATE OR POSTDOC: WHERE TO BEGIN?

You're in the middle or at the end of your thesis, or doing a postdoc. You hold your degree from UNIL or you come from another university in Switzerland or abroad. You want to decide which route to take, find a new job and plan for the future. You don't know where to begin. You may be asking yourself many questions. Questions like:

- * Should I look for job ads in my scientific domain?
- * What needs to be on my CV for a career in academic research?
- * How much time should I give to a postdoc before I get going on Plan B?
- * Would it be a good idea to think about something other than an academic career?
- * Am I really going to have to do a postdoc abroad?
- * Could I possibly find anything as fulfilling elsewhere?
- * Am I capable?

This guide is written for you.

Even if the future is still a little fuzzy and the way ahead unclear, the goal of this guide is to give you support so you can make decisions with a good understanding of what's at stake and what matters to you. So that you'll have a good toolbox with which to make your way. And so that you know where you can find relevant advice.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

We recommend you begin with the fundamental data (sometimes, the most difficult to find!), which means: yourself. Who are you? What's your professional profile? As well as your scientific knowledge, what are your skills? What motivates you? The first chapters of this guide will help you answer these questions.

After that, we'll take a look at the external data: what do doctorate holders do, whether they're from UNIL or other Swiss or foreign institutions? Which routes have they taken and what roles do they have? How best to understand the possibilities open to you professionally?

In the third section, we present your toolkit: the CV, the cover letter and everything that's expected in an application. We also look at the importance of seeking out additional information and the tools available to you online. All of this whether you're looking in or beyond academic research.

The fourth and last section is an overview of a few important aspects of your integration in your new role. How to construct your network, and how to manage the transition into your new role? How to negotiate your employment conditions, and how to keep the balance with your family? How to ensure your professional development? And what to do if you suspect racial discrimination, sexual harassment, or sexism?



THE CAREER CAFÉ AT THE GRADUATE CAMPUS

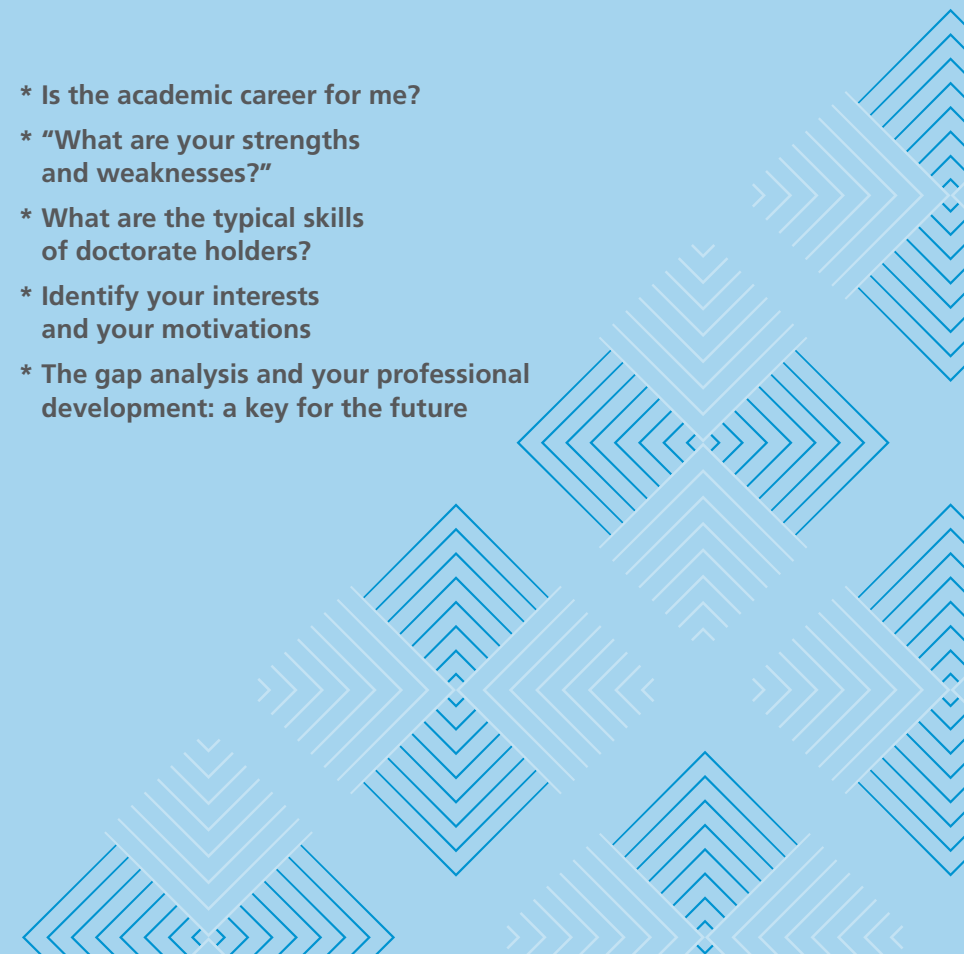
We meet monthly to discuss the professional paths taken by doctorate holders and different aspects of career and professional development, such as how to choose your path and get going on the process, as well as the resources available for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers at UNIL/CHUV.

unil.ch/graduatecampus > Workshops



The Graduate Campus has the mission of informing and supporting every doctoral and postdoctoral researcher at the University of Lausanne, to help them achieve their personal goals and prepare for a successful career. Each month, the Graduate Campus organises meetings and workshops, in addition to individual counselling and coaching. These services are free and provided in English and French.

KNOWING YOURSELF

- * Is the academic career for me?
 - * “What are your strengths and weaknesses?”
 - * What are the typical skills of doctorate holders?
 - * Identify your interests and your motivations
 - * The gap analysis and your professional development: a key for the future
- 



IS THE ACADEMIC CAREER FOR ME?

It's never too early to think seriously about the next stage of your professional path: it's even a habit to develop throughout your career. This means growing your self-awareness about your strengths, your motivations, your knowledge, your values. Regular reflection on these questions will be a key competence for your professional future: it will help you identify the skills you've developed and those you need to focus on next, as well as the kind of environment and role that you're aiming for. Once you've started on this, you'll be able to prepare an application that corresponds not just to the requirements of your prospective employer, but also to your personal preferences.

While you're working on your thesis, it's normal that you identify with the image of an academic researcher. As with any professional role, constructing a self-image which corresponds with what's expected in your current environment helps you to feel more at ease and progress in your work. Because the doctorate is the fundamental qualification for an academic career, it's also normal that many doctoral candidates see themselves in research over the long term. The experience of the doctorate or postdoc may however bring up a few questions: you may begin to ask yourself if the academic world is where you'll feel right in the long term, whether you want to stay in scientific research, and even whether a career in another area might be a better fit for you.

Before you begin a contract as a postdoctoral researcher, we encourage you to ask yourself some important questions. Taking a step back and clarifying your interests will help you better understand what's at stake for you in continuing on an academic path.

“WHAT ARE YOUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES?”

This interview question is a little tired! Nevertheless, it highlights a fundamental aspect of professional orientation: what we call transversal skills.

A transversal skill is developed during a professional or personal experience and will be reinforced by theory (whether that's through reading or a training session). Your analytical skill, for example, is based on your research (experience) and knowledge of scientific method (theory). Depending on your individual experience, you'll be more than a scientist in your particular domain: you're also a data analyst, a writer, a project manager, among many others.

A good understanding of your skills, the strengths and the weaknesses in your professional profile, will help to identify your objectives and better manage your professional development. It's your transversal skills especially that will help you move into other domains beyond academic research.

Depending on your professional goals, it's up to you to prepare yourself by learning or strengthening the skills which will provide the continuity between the doctorate or postdoc and the role you're aiming at. Your ability to edit text, for example, will be useful in becoming a consultant or the manager of research funds in a foundation. Transversal skills can be acquired in many different ways:

- * In activities linked to your research (developing your doctoral project, research assistantship, working in the lab or guiding students, making grant applications, etc.)
- * In activities conducted in parallel to your research (organising scientific events, editing an issue of a journal, fundraising, coordinating or leading a working group, etc.)
- * In activities outside of your research (sports, hobbies or volunteering, your first student jobs, etc.)

WHAT ARE THE TYPICAL SKILLS OF DOCTORATE HOLDERS?

Your individual skills profile will be determined by your particular experiences (in your private and professional life, as well as during your studies) and by whatever you have undertaken for your professional development. That said, the experience of academic research can be linked to specific skills.

The Graduate Campus' Skills Framework presents an inventory of the skills employed by doctoral and postdoctoral researchers during their activities at UNIL. Other than the technical knowledge specific to a scientific domain, the doctoral and postdoctoral experience offers a wide range of opportunities to develop transversal skills – and in every scientific domain!

Research methodology, project management, adaptability and management of diversity, results orientation, creativity, valorising results, leadership... these are just some examples that may be familiar to you. The following classification is a tool for your professional development:

- * Technical skills: scientific expertise, research methodology, analysis and synthesis, valorisation of results or of work, as well as oral and written communication
- * Management skills: managing information, projects, risk, and resources

- * Personal skills: teaching and training, reflexivity, creativity, commitment and motivation, results orientation, decision-making, autonomy and integrity
- * Interpersonal or social skills: listening and empathy, negotiation and managing tensions or conflicts, collaboration and teamwork, team management and leadership, adaptability, managing diversity, and the ability to persuade

Completing a thesis is equivalent to managing a project. So, I have project management skills.



IDENTIFY YOUR INTERESTS AND YOUR MOTIVATIONS



"By making an inventory of my skills, I'm able to create a vocabulary for my experience as a doctoral candidate"

Postdoc researcher at UNIL

Looking more broadly at your research activities in recent years, it's essential to ask yourself the following questions:

- * What skills were necessary to be able to publish, present and learn?
- * What has been your contribution, on a small or large scale, in your research domain and in your working environment?
- * What are the characteristics that distinguish you from your colleagues (apart from your research topic)?



SKILLS ADVICE

In order to conduct your own skills inventory, get hold of a skills framework designed for the doctorate holder. With this as your guide, you'll be able to study each of the skills and reflect on the experiences you've had that will have helped develop them – or think about the experiences you've had in order to identify the skills you've developed. Online tools are available to help you with this exercise (see below), in addition to the UNIL skills framework "Unfold your future" (see below). If you have any doubts, ask those around you: what's the opinion of your supervisor, someone close to you, or a colleague you trust? What do they think are your top three skills?



Environnement	Besoins	Valeurs
Terrain	Flexibilité	Bienveillance
Laboratoire	Soutien	Expérience
Académique	Équipe	Autonomie

Once you've completed your skills inventory, you can study it to identify the areas in which you have a greater or lesser interest. Where do you find your energy in work? Which activities do you find exhausting, and which ones do you enjoy (even if you're tired at the end of it!)? You can rank your skills on a scale of priority, neutral, and to be avoided.



COMPROMISE

A career that doesn't contain any activity you'd prefer to avoid doesn't exist (or at least, not in this universe). If you manage to find a role in which you enjoy the majority of what you're doing, the compromise will lie in what additional tasks you'll do.



YOUR MOTIVATIONS ARE BASED ON YOUR VALUES

Without moral connotations, a value gives you reasons and ways to act in a situation, because it meets several criteria:

- * It has particular qualities of behaviour and action
- * It has a sense and utility for you, independently of the results and external rewards
- * It is an independent choice, one that hasn't been imposed by others
- * It is a benchmark for action
- * It can take shape in many ways, without depending on a particular context



THE GAP ANALYSIS AND YOUR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A KEY FOR THE FUTURE

What's important for you? Your response to this question will be specific to you. It can take time to identify your values, your aspirations, or your role models. We encourage you to put aside for a moment the words "I should". Think instead about some of the following key questions:

- * What experiences have you had that you're proud of? What connects them?
- * You've told yourself you want to make the world better. What does that mean, exactly, for you?
- * As a child, you dreamt about becoming... what? An astronaut? A doctor? A lorry driver? What connects these different dreams?
- * Who embodies success for you? What aspect of their background or character particularly impresses you?



A **psychometric analysis** such as the **TRIMA** - available through a **CUSO workshop (for doctoral candidates)** or with the **Graduate Campus**, will help you identify your own motivations.
competences.cuso.ch
unil.ch/graduatecampus > Workshops

You've taken care of your skills inventory and you've realised that there may well be a gap between the skills you have and those required in the domains for the role you're aiming for. Sometimes, there are skills you don't enjoy – but you'll have to develop them in order to do what interests you. Managing budgets, for example, is a skill necessary for coordinating projects.

The gap analysis is a three-step process:

- * Who are you today, and where do you want to go?
- * What will you need in order to get there?
- * What experiences and training will be useful to help you get to where you want to be?

No stress! The tools are available to you at UNIL. Once you have an idea of what your professional future will look like, you can develop your side-activities and projects in that direction. The goal is to build continuity between your current research and your next professional step. Don't wait until the end of your contract to do this: if you can put aside an hour (more or less) every week in order to attend to this process, you'll make great strides over the long run (take it from those who've been there!).



Having a good idea of your skills, of their level and how to present them will be essential – both to set your goals for professional development, and to respond to the hiring criteria of your potential employer.



Develop your skills by seeking out new experiences. For example, you can ask your supervisor if there are tasks that you could take on, or at the faculty office if there are committees you could be part of.



**KNOW YOUR PROFILE:
THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE**

Graduate Campus (undated), Déployer son doctorat... *Unfold your future, skills framework for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers* [paper version]. Lausanne, UNIL.

The postdoc's self-evaluation guide will help you identify the skills to develop for a career in academic research.

unil.ch/graduatecampus > Careers with a PhD > The Academic Career



TAKE AN ONLINE SKILLS ASSESSMENT:

DocPRO will help you put together your professional profile with an idea of your level of skills. Available in English and French, the site lets you identify the key words in both languages.
mydocpro.org/en

ImaginePhD is a tool to explore the career possibilities and plan your next steps if you're in the humanities or social sciences. It provides an assessment of your skills and interests in relation to typical roles for doctorate holders.
imaginephd.com

myIDP Science Careers is for developing a scientific career in the natural and life sciences. The tool integrates the assessment of your skills and interests to match them with potential roles typically held by doctorate holders.
myidp.sciencecareers.org

Vitae Researcher Development Framework is a framework of skills necessary for a career in academic research.
vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development/about-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework



DEVELOPING YOUR SKILLS: THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Graduate Campus

The Graduate Campus provides training for skills relative to a research career, many with priority for postdocs
unil.ch/graduatecampus > Workshops

Links to all the programmes and offers listed below are available on one page:
unil.ch/graduatecampus > Workshops > More Support and Resources

If you don't find an offer that corresponds with your needs, you can also organise a workshop, with financial support from the Graduate Campus.
unil.ch/graduatecampus > Workshops > Community and wellbeing > Call for projects

Transversal programme of the Conference of Western Swiss Universities (CUSO)

Skills development training for doctoral candidates in the cantonal universities of western Switzerland.
competences.cuso.ch

Regard, Equal Opportunities Offices

Skills development training for women researchers.
unifr.ch/regard/

PROWD, UNIL Equal Opportunities Office

The PROfessional Women with Doctorates (PROWD) programme is for women researchers at UNIL and CHUV.
unil.ch/egalite > Egalité femmes-hommes > Soutien aux carrières féminines > Chercheuses

Centre for Teaching and Learning (CSE)

Teaching workshops, distance learning, communication and facilitation.
unil.ch/cse

Computer Center (CI)

Workshops on available software.
unil.ch/ci


Language Center (CDL)

Academic English courses for researchers.
unil.ch/cdl

Skills for Scientists

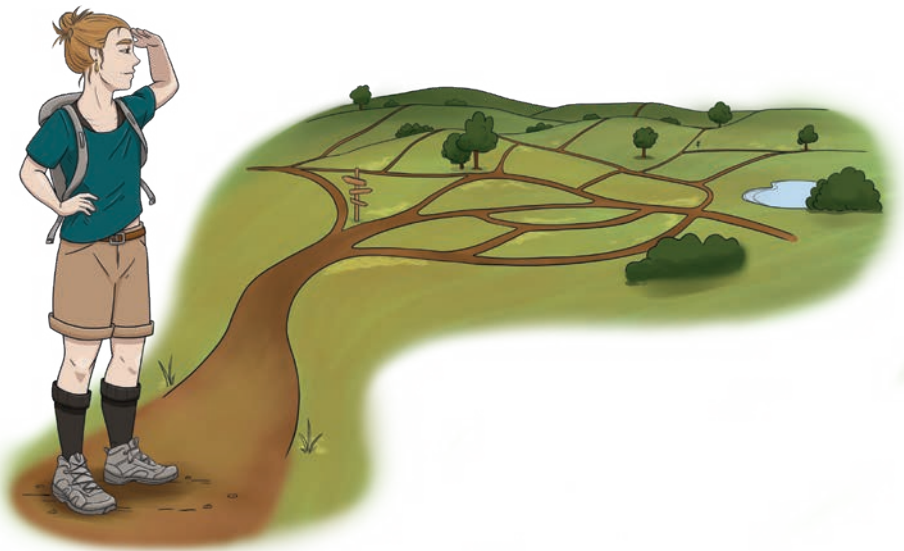
Workshops and round tables for researchers at the Faculty of Biology and Medicine (FBM).
unil.ch/skillsforscientists/

KNOWING YOUR OPTIONS

- * What are the numbers,
and what do doctorate holders do?
 - * How to find out more
about my options?
 - » Where can I talk about
my career prospects?
- 

WHAT ARE THE NUMBERS, AND WHAT DO DOCTORATE HOLDERS DO?

Understanding yourself better while learning about the paths other PhDs have taken is a good way to prepare for the next step in your career. Qualitative and quantitative data is available: we know that the majority of PhDs will not stay in academic research and will pursue careers in multiple fields.



According to the surveys conducted by the Swiss Federal Office of Statistics (2018a), doctorate holders from the humanities and social sciences (45%) and natural sciences (45%) are most likely to continue on the path of a career in academic research. They are followed by the technical sciences (30%), economics and law (28%), and medicine and pharmaceutical sciences (9%).

Of the one-third of doctorate holders who are on an academic research career path one year after they receive their degree, one-third of those will still be on that path four years later. This change happens mainly in the natural sciences, where we see a 40% rate of reorientation, and less in the humanities and social sciences (18%). One of the reasons for this high rate for natural sciences is the possibility to work within one's scientific expertise in sectors beyond academic research. (OFS 2018a: chap.4)

In addition to the sector of employment, we need to look at the terms and conditions of employment. Among Swiss university graduates from 2016, 80% of those employed in the academic sector one year later were employed on a fixed-term contract. An almost opposite situation was true for the private and public sectors, where permanent contracts were much more widespread (77% of those employed in public administration, all the way up to 96% in finance and insurance). (OFS 2018c)

A doctorate is generally an asset when applying for a position of responsibility beyond academic research, as 35% of PhDs are in a management position six years after obtaining their degree, and more than 50% are managers after two years (FSO 2016). There are more managerial positions in the private sector than in the public; some fields have a lower proportion of managers than others, namely social and educational sciences, humanities, health, and design.

In its survey of UNIL PhDs who defended their thesis between 2007 and 2017, the Graduate Campus identified a quarter of PhDs in higher education (26%), 19% in the public sector, and at least 23% in the private sector (unfortunately, we were unable to find one quarter of the population).



Overall, women are under-represented in management positions: 31% of women against 47% of men (FSO 2016). This is strongly observed in the fields of social sciences and education, law and economics. In the humanities, the gender gap is not significant. On the other hand, women are equally likely to become managers in the natural sciences, construction, technical sciences, agriculture and forestry. In the universities, 30% of teaching staff with managerial responsibility (generally professorships) are women, with universities having the lowest average rate (23%) (FSO 2018b: 15).



SO WHAT DO UNIL PHDS DO?

Beyond the figures, the survey of UNIL PhDs from 2007 to 2017 shows the diversity of functions held by graduates of all faculties. Those who are still working in the universities are professors, senior researchers, assistant professors and lecturers – as well as deputies to senior management (“adjoint-e-s”), science librarians and study advisors. In the public sector, we find bioinformaticians, heads of department and sector, and museum curators. In the private sector, there are CEOs and CIOs, columnists, project managers and senior scientists. Of the 1,800 people identified in the study, we have about 1,000 job titles. Academic titles (postdoc, assistant professor, etc) are the most standardised, whereas in other employment sectors, the roles are diverse.

- * Académie des sciences sociales et humaines (2018). “Next Generation: pour une promotion efficace de la relève ». Swiss Academies Reports 13 (2). ISSN 2297–1572. Available at: sagw.ch/fileadmin/redaktion_sagw/dokumente/Publikationen/Berichte/NextGeneration_fr.pdf
- * Bureau de l'égalité de l'Université de Lausanne (2018). L'égalité en chiffres. Monitoring de l'égalité à l'Université de Lausanne 2017. Lausanne: Université de Lausanne. Available at: unil.ch/egalite/files/live/sites/egalite/files/Egalite_UNIL/MONITORING%202017%20.pdf
- * European Commission (2019). She Figures 2018. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. ISBN 978-92-79-86715-6
- * Graduate Campus (2019), Enquête Devenir Docteur.e.s UNIL, Lausanne : Université de Lausanne. Figures available at: unil.ch/graduatecampus/home/menueinst/carriere-avec-doctorat/enquete-devenir-docteurs-unil.html
- * Federal Office of Statistics (2010), La formation et la situation professionnelle des titulaires d'un doctorat. Résultats issus des données du Système d'information universitaire suisse et de l'enquête 2007 auprès des personnes nouvellement diplômées [1152-0700]. Neuchâtel: FSO. ISBN 978-3-303-15513-4

- * Federal Office of Statistics (2016), L'accès à la fonction de cadre parmi les diplômés des hautes écoles. Une analyse basée sur l'Enquête suisse auprès des personnes diplômées des hautes écoles en 2010 [1650-1600]. Neuchâtel: FSO. ISBN 978-3-303-15616-2
- * Federal Office of Statistics (2018a). Facilitateurs et entraves à la carrière académique des docteurs diplômés en 2012 [1833-1200]. Neuchâtel: FSO. ISBN 978-3-303-15638-4
- * Federal Office of Statistics (2018b). Personnel des institutions de formation [1816-1800]. Neuchâtel: FSO. Available at: edudoc.ch/record/132974?ln=en
- * Federal Office of Statistics (2018c). Enquête auprès des diplômés des hautes écoles. Neuchâtel: FSO. Available at: bfs.admin.ch/bfs/fr/home/statistiques/education-science/enquetes/ashs.html



DISCOVER THE PATHS TAKEN BY UNIL PHDS

The Graduate Campus has a series of testimonials from UNIL PhDs in the forms of short interviews available on our website. Interviewees share their experiences and advice on the period after the doctorate and explain the path that led them to their current position. unil.ch/graduatecampus > Careers with a PhD > After the PhD: UNIL portraits



MAJOR STUDIES ON THE FUTURE OF PHDS

Beyond Switzerland, several surveys have been published in the last few years:

In francophone Belgium:

Neda Bebiroglu, Baptiste Dethier and Christel Ameryckx (2020). *Education-job match among PhD holders in the Federation Wallonia-Brussels. Observatory Thematic Report Series #1, Volume 2.*

Available at: observatoire.frs-fnrs.be/docs/REPORT_EMPLOYMENT_VOL2_ENG.pdf

In Europe:

European Science Foundation (2017). *Career Tracking Survey of Doctorate Holders*. Project Report.

Available at: esf.org/fileadmin/user_upload/esf/F-FINAL-Career_Tracking_Survey_2017_Project_Report.pdf

League of European Research Universities (2018). *Delivering Talent: careers of researchers inside and outside academia*. Position paper. Available at: leru.org/publications/delivering-talent-careers-of-researchers-inside-and-outside-academia

HOW TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT MY OPTIONS?

Very often, a doctorate holder tells themselves: “either I continue with a postdoc and hope to one day get to the level of a senior researcher, or even a professor, or I become a researcher in a multinational / high school teacher”. In fact, the choice is anything but binary, as numerous surveys demonstrate.

Rather than sticking to this dichotomy of choice, you can put on your researcher’s hat and develop your personal project: what do people do? What are the work environments, the values and organisational cultures of the companies and organisations that interest me? And what are their needs and the problems they’re trying to solve?

Dare to look past your preconceived ideas and find out more about the employers and employment sectors you know (almost) nothing about, as well as the different types of roles. Don’t look just in job ads: often, the answers to your questions lie elsewhere.

Networking will be essential here. Whether it’s in order to better understand the perspectives open to you; whether it’s so that you can be better known. Whatever your professional destination, your network will be hugely important. This doesn’t mean taking on a “sales” approach, or even “you scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours”. Think instead of “connecting with others” and of ways in which you can expand your horizons while looking for ways you can contribute to the work and lives of those you meet.

Have a think about the people you know in your social circle, in your family and professional life. Who could you discuss your questions with? Who could these people put you in contact with?

At the end of this guide, you’ll find more advice on networking.



IDENTIFY THE INFORMATION YOU NEED, AND LET PEOPLE KNOW!

It’s very difficult to know who your acquaintances know, without asking the question! Very often, it’s through second or third level contacts that we begin to find out the most crucial information. That’s why it’s so important to talk about the information that you’re looking for (about a business sector, an organisation, a type of role, etc.), and even to be able to put words and sentences on your professional goals and your aspirations. With a clearer idea of what you’re looking for, the people in your initial network will be better able to identify the acquaintances they have that could provide the information you’re looking for. A workshop or advice can help you make a start with networking: don’t forget to check the different support programmes open to you.

WHERE CAN I TALK ABOUT MY CAREER PROSPECTS?

Take advantage of events organised at UNIL or by other institutions to find out more. Instead of waiting for the “perfect opportunity for me”, keep an open mind and start by saying, “I would like to know more about...” Here are a few suggestions:

THE ALUMNIL NETWORK AND THE DOCTEUR-E-S UNIL COMMUNITY

The Alumni Office organises occasional meetings for UNIL graduates to get to know different career paths and to network. Since 2020, all new UNIL PhDs are part of the UNIL PhD community of the Alumnail Network (Réseau Alumnail). This community aims to strengthen contacts and exchanges between UNIL doctoral holders throughout their professional career, notably through events.
www.unil.ch/alumnail/

The Alumni Office also offers a free coaching programme, called TandemPRO, which facilitates the sharing of experience by offering UNIL PhDs the possibility to meet with a “TandemPRO Coach”. This service is your

opportunity to make contacts, develop your network, identify opportunities and gather advice for the next step in your career.
www.unil.ch/alumnail/tandempro/

The Alumnail Network’s activities are conducted mainly in French. Don’t hesitate to get in touch with them to ask for more details in English!

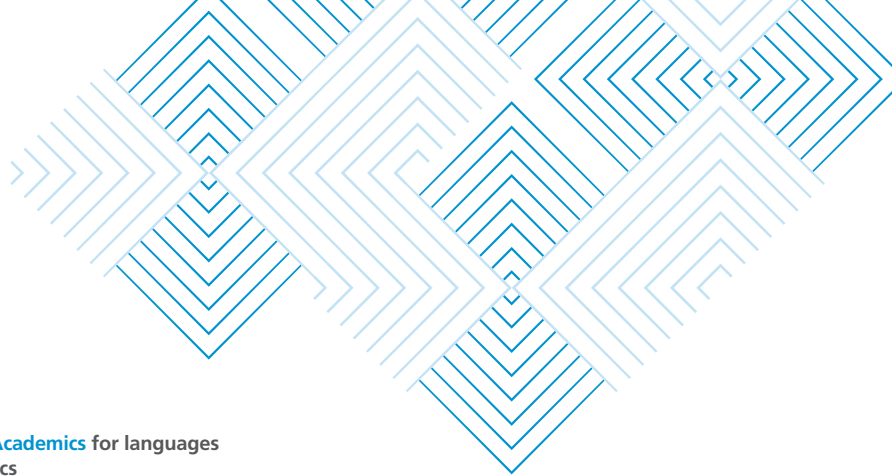
CAREER DAYS AT UNIL

Register for career days organised by your faculty, especially if they include the topic of careers with a doctorate! For example:

- * La Journée des carrières (GSE)
- * Life Science Career Day (FBM)
- * Career Networking Fair (HEC)
- * Career Days (association AIESEC Switzerland)



Often, employers who take part in a career day are looking primarily for Masters graduates and may not be interested in a PhD’s CV. Nevertheless, you can still take the opportunity to go and find out more about what they do and their working environment. The goal is to find out more about the context and the issues for today’s companies, and even to grow your network.



A FEW SITES WITH PROFILES OF PHDS AND CAREER ADVICE

Academics.com provides advice and job ads (academic and beyond academia) in Germany, Austria and Switzerland
academics.com/career-advice/job-profiles

Beyond Academe for historians
beyondacademe.com/index.html

Beyond the PhD for PhDs in Arts or Human Sciences
beyondthephd.co.uk/

PhilSkills for philosophers
philskills.com/

Connected Academics for languages and linguistics
connect.mla.hcommons.org/

EMBL Careers for PhDs in life sciences
blogs.embl.org/careers/

PhDs at Work: doctorate holders describe the work they do and where they work
phdsatwork.com/

The Professor Is In for everyone
theprofessorisin.com/pearlsofwisdom/

THE ACADEMIC TRACK: WHERE TO BEGIN?

- * **Higher education institutions in Switzerland**
- * **Funding of academic research**
- * **The academic path in Switzerland: from postdoc to professorship**
 - » The postdoctoral phase
 - » Permanent posts
- * **Swiss variations**
 - » Habilitation
 - » The UAS and HEP/Ph
- * **Between the dream and the cliff-face: how to succeed in an academic career in Switzerland?**
 - » What does it take to move from a researcher to a stable position?
 - » The postdoctoral pathway
 - » Put the ball on your side of the court: resources
 - » A postdoc abroad
 - » Knowing how to present yourself: the toolbox

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN SWITZERLAND



Most early career researchers in Switzerland pursue a career in academic research almost exclusively at the universities: there isn't a government body which offers equivalent research positions. A stable position at a university is therefore the best guarantee of pursuing academic research for anyone uninterested in working in the private or public sectors. Other institutions, such as the cantonal hospitals or the federal administration, may offer postdoctoral positions in applied research.

The Swiss higher education institutions can be divided into three categories:

- * The cantonal universities, including UNIL
- * The federal institutes of technology (the EPFL and ETHZ)
- * The universities of applied science (UAS) and of teacher education (HEP/Ph)

Scientific research is conducted in the majority of higher education institutions, but only the cantonal universities and federal institutes of technology have the right to award the doctorate. While the regulation of the ten cantonal universities is governed by the respective cantonal authorities, the EPFL and ETHZ are governed by federal law. Despite this decentralised structure and the autonomy of the universities, the federal government is an important actor in this structure: firstly through the subsidies granted to the cantonal universities, and then through its role in co-managing and coordinating higher education in Switzerland.

The nine UAS are organised on cantonal or regional lines and are active in diverse domains, such as technology, information technology, construction and planning, economics and services, design and health. Their mission is to provide practice-oriented education (at Bachelor level and in some cases at Masters level), applied research and development, and continuing education. In addition, they provide services and collaborate with teaching and research partners in Switzerland and abroad.

The fourteen universities of teacher education are responsible for the training of teachers from pre-school to secondary school, as well as for the professions in the field of special education. Their mission is to provide initial and continuing education, research and development, and the provision of services.

At the federal level, the federal government issues recommendations and plays an important role through the funding of research programmes. Responsibility for coordinating university activities at the national level lies with swissuniversities, the joint body of the Rectors' Conferences of different universities, and the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI). The universities have a large degree of autonomy in determining academic policy.

FUNDING OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH

Cantonal and federal government provide funding for doctoral and postdoctoral positions. The Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) provides substantial funding for positions and projects.

Faced with the lack of posts available at the universities, national and international research funding or research promotion agencies, such as the SNSF, are playing an increasingly important role. The measures put in place by these organisations are designed to provide financial support for all stages of a career, from the doctorate to a professorship.

In order to make the European research market more attractive, the strengthening of the European Research Area is also accompanied by a desire to harmonise the conditions for academic careers.

Consequently, the structure of the academic career is increasingly standardised and associating a group of academic functions with a group of funding measures for each phase of the career.



The UNIL Research Support Service can help you choose the best funding agency and programme.
unil.ch/ > [Information for > Researchers](#)

THE ACADEMIC PATH IN SWITZERLAND: FROM POSTDOC TO PROFESSORSHIP

Two principal postdoctoral stages can be observed in Switzerland: the first is the postdoctoral phase up to senior researcher, including first assistants, postdocs (including the SNSF) and junior lecturer (Maître assistant-e). This phase is characterised by short-term contracts of around two years each, with strong encouragement for international mobility.

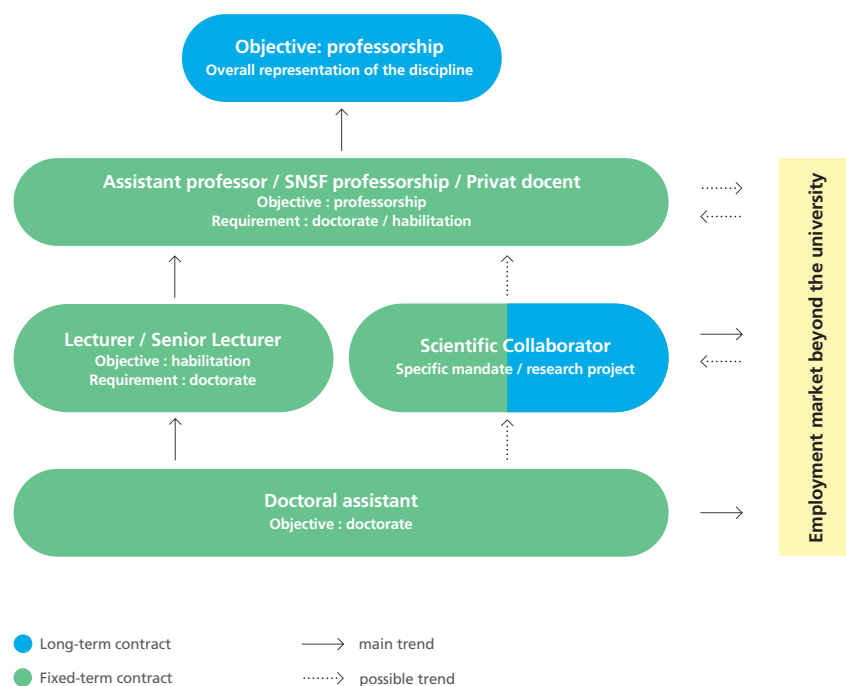
Descriptions for these types of posts are very variable: there is no standard path towards professorship. Given the high number of doctoral candidates in Switzerland, and the country's attractiveness for researchers from abroad, the higher education institutions rarely have difficulty in finding applicants for these roles.

The second phase goes from senior researcher to junior professor (including assistant professor, SNSF professor, and tenure-track professor). This stage is extremely competitive, given that it represents just 2% of the research posts available in the higher education institutions. Some of the posts are on tenure track, which means they are of limited duration but with strong chances of confirmation if the person concerned reaches their given objectives.



THE CURRENT ACADEMIC CAREER PATH IN SWITZERLAND

Current paths



This diagram clearly illustrates the different career stages within the academic system, and underscores the extent of short-term contracts. The Swiss higher education system is constructed around academic chairs, which

explains the low number of permanent posts outside professorships, even though most of the research is carried out by postdocs on fixed-term contracts.

THE POSTDOCTORAL PHASE

Focused on gaining experience, developing research and the skills necessary to become a successful independent researcher, the postdoctoral phase is a crossroads in the career path.

The form of the postdoc will vary across scientific disciplines. In general, the postdoc is carried out in an institution other than the one that awarded the doctorate: a stay at another university, particularly one abroad, is highly valued. In some universities, the postdoc is compulsory in order to obtain a position as assistant professor. Four to six years after the end of the doctorate, professors expect the postdoc to have taken on a role as group leader and to acquire their own funding.

Consequently, this is a phase that has important consequences for the rest of the academic career.

In Switzerland, postdoctoral positions are funded either by an SNSF award, or as part of a research project. A stay in another higher education institution is sometimes considered to be a condition for participation in an SNSF funding programme.

PERMANENT POSTS

Doctoral and postdoctoral researchers, employed on fixed-term contracts, make up 64% of the scientific workforce in the universities. The remaining workforce is made up of part-time teaching staff (24%), professors (9%), researchers with permanent contracts (2%), and junior professors (2%) (SERI 2014: 24-25).

Once the postdoctoral phase is over, the goal is to obtain stability through a permanent contract. While the professorship may be the ultimate goal, the limited possibilities to achieve it encourage researchers to focus on other permanent positions.



MAÎTRES ASSISTANT-E-S (MA)

At the time of recruitment, MAs are expected to have a more extensive scientific record than doctoral candidates, particularly in terms of publications. Similarly, a stay in another academic institution is valued and sometimes required. During the hiring process, it's worth asking about planned research projects and the possibility of developing your own projects. These positions are of limited duration and depend hierarchically on a full or associate professor. The standard translation at UNIL for this post is "Lecturer".



MEDECINE

The academic path in medicine often involves a dual engagement: research and clinical. Academic and hospital-based work run parallel with each other, sometimes with the possibility of concentrating on one aspect for a certain period of time.



MAÎTRES D'ENSEIGNEMENT ET DE RECHERCHE (MER)

This type of position is not primarily intended to ensure the succession of academics but aims instead to strengthen research units: it is the only permanent role available in the intermediate phase between doctorate and professorship. However, as members of the intermediate phase, MERs depend on the institute or department hierarchy to which they are attached and cannot take on the direction of an institute.

Previous experience plays an important role in the appointment to an MER position. The candidate must demonstrate a high level of competence in academic research and teaching, backed up by a solid publication record. The standard translation at UNIL for this post is "Senior Lecturer".



ASSISTANT PROFESSORS

Assistant professorships are intended to strengthen the rising academic generation by offering positions for early career talents that allow them to develop their research independently. The duration of such an appointment at UNIL is four to six years (two-year contract, renewable twice) – this differs from one institution to the next, as do the exact conditions of an extension, which is based on an evaluation. Assistant professorships may be advertised as tenure track positions (*prétitularisation conditionnelle*). Tenure track gives an assistant professor the possibility of obtaining a stable professorship after five or six years, provided that their scientific dossier is positively evaluated.



ORDINARY AND ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS

Ordinary professors are named to their position, also called a "chair", and responsible for the research and teaching of a discipline, as well as related services. The post of ordinary professor is considered to be the culmination of an academic career. The employment rate may not be less than 80%.

Associate professors are responsible for the teaching and research of part of a discipline. They participate in, but are not responsible for, management and organisational tasks.

In addition to the responsibilities mentioned above, ordinary, extraordinary or associate professors may also be asked to take part in the management of the university, often on a rotating basis. This can include the role of head of department or as (vice-)deans for the faculty. Vice-rectors and the rector are also recruited from among the professorial body.

SWISS VARIATIONS



HABILITATION

In German-speaking countries and regions, habilitation is the highest academic qualification and confers on the candidate (the *HabilitandIn*) the *venia legendi*, i.e. the “permission to lecture”, or the *ius docendi*, the “right to teach”, for a specific academic subject and valid throughout their career. Those who have obtained their *venia legendi* may hold the title of *PrivatdozentIn*. The *ius docendi* gives access to professorship.

Candidates for habilitation must hold a doctorate. In German-speaking universities, habilitation is often equated with a “second thesis”, defended before a jury of professors, i.e. future peers. The habilitation is increasingly submitted in a cumulative form, combining various research projects. The rules for awarding habilitation vary from one institution (and even from one faculty) to another.

In the German-speaking part of Switzerland, as in Germany and Austria, habilitation – or an equivalent – is in many cases still a prerequisite for appointment to a professorship. In the French-speaking part of Switzerland, habilitation does not play a significant role. It may allow for the Privatdozentin to obtain a six-year contract to teach a specific subject. Equivalences exist for people from systems where the habilitation is unknown: a second monograph, particularly in the humanities, a positive evaluation of a conditional tenure track, or, more generally, a very good scientific record.

THE UAS AND HEP/PH

In contrast to the cantonal universities and the federal institutes of technology, more than two-thirds of the teaching staff at the universities of applied sciences and the universities of teacher education are professors. The current requirements for qualifications and experience in research, as well as in professional practice, vary from one field to another, from one canton to another, and according to the post.

Applied research, development and services for third parties are a growing part of activities in the UAS and HEP/Ph. Research especially is expanding rapidly within these institutions, opening up opportunities for doctorate holders interested in applied research. In its survey of the careers of UNIL doctorate holders from 2007 to 2017, the Graduate Campus found around fifty people employed in the UAS and HEP/Ph: ordinary professors as well as lecturers, scientific assistants and senior researchers.



KEEP IN CONTACT!

Just as within the universities, your network will play a fundamental role in the UAS or HEP/Ph. Stay informed about and participate in conferences and seminars organised within these institutions – the information is available on their websites and through mailing lists. A good way to develop your network is to get to know professors active in R&D and perhaps propose a collaborative project.



The HES in Switzerland:
hes-so.ch/en/schools-and-fields-of-study/schools

BETWEEN THE DREAM AND THE CLIFF-FACE: HOW TO SUCCEED IN AN ACADEMIC CAREER IN SWITZERLAND?

The number of doctorates awarded by Swiss universities is constantly increasing: from 3,100 in 2005, to 4,309 in 2019, which represents a total of 55,000 doctorates in just fifteen years. Over the same period, the number of professors employed in third level institutions has gone from 3,005 to 4,531 (OFS STAT-STAB). Even if many newly graduate doctorate holders leave to continue their career abroad, others will come to Switzerland for their postdoctoral research. The chances of staying in Switzerland and becoming a university professor are very low: and it's far from being just a question of who does the best research.

Many postdoctoral researchers want to believe they'll be the exception when they look at the late age at nomination to a tenured position in Switzerland (median age: 46) (ASSH 2018; UNIL Equality Office 2018). It is certainly possible to be nominated at an earlier age in other countries, but the conditions of this mobility (precarity or insufficient infrastructure) and their consequences over the long term can create obstacles to a return in Switzerland (loss of direct contacts in the universities, or in some scientific disciplines, tacit preferences for local candidates, etc.).

Early career researchers often go from one contract to the next without the guarantee of a permanent position. Postdoctoral researchers who don't apply for funding (the majority, according to the SERI estimate), or who apply late and unsuccessfully, remain on temporary contracts over a long period, and dependent

on contract renewals and extensions in a different unit. It's for this reason that the number of postdoctoral researchers is relatively high in the universities, at around two per professor (SERI 2014: 47).

The Federal Statistics Office (2018) and the Swiss Academy for Social Sciences (2018) analysed the facilitators and the barriers to an academic career. They underscore the key elements which facilitate access to academic posts and thus to career development:

- * The motivation to pursue an academic career right from the start of studies, and the early creation of a profile of scientific activity
- * The encouragement and concrete support of the thesis supervisor or of a mentor
- * The development of autonomy in their research projects, most of all at the postdoctoral stage
- * The development of a strong network in the scientific community, and collaborative projects
- * The publication of scientific articles and peer recognition
- * Research stays abroad during the PhD and postdoctoral stage

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WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO MOVE FROM A RESEARCHER TO A STABLE POSITION?

Or in other words, how can I become more and more independent?

An academic career demands a lot of perseverance and a willingness to take on several professional and financial risks. It is also the norm for researchers to rise to prominence quickly. In certain scientific domains, the postdoctoral phase may be much faster, or even non-existent (for example, in some disciplines in Economics). A postdoc won't have the same degree of importance for different fields and career goals.



If you are a doctoral candidate, the first resource to mobilise for an academic career is your supervisor, as well as more advanced colleagues. They will be able to inform you about existing opportunities in the field and advise you on how to apply or on funding possibilities.



If you are a postdoctoral researcher, talk about your career prospects with your direct colleagues in your institute, faculty or lab. They probably have the same questions or have already had experiences that could be useful for you. In some faculties, early career researcher associations organise career-related events.

Talking about your career plans is one way to signal to those around you (your supervisors, etc.) that you're looking to put into place your plan to minimise the risks inherent in an academic career. Knowing the "rules of the game" and getting involved in one or more formal and informal networks is equally important to put all the chances on your side. However, if we compare the individual paths of researchers with the structural logic of the Swiss academic system outlined above, we can see that there are exceptions – and many researchers eventually find some professional stability from one contract to the next. That said, there are more opportunities to be found in the global academic market. In many countries, pre-professorship positions can offer more stability.



Going from one postdoc to the next for more than six years is not advisable. Indeed, the postdoctoral period, if it extends over the long-term, can become a handicap in reorienting yourself towards a career beyond academia. You can mitigate the risks by developing your activities in parallel with and outside your academic projects. That way, you'll expand your network, your skills, and your knowledge.

THE POSTDOCTORAL PATHWAY

As a senior researcher, the demands of the job require that you develop your research, teaching and management skills. You will need to know how to present these skills in a scientific application to a recruitment committee. In "keys to recruitment" below, you'll find advice on how your application will be assessed, and tips for your presentation.

BUILDING YOUR RESEARCH PROFILE

Develop your own research projects:

- * define your line of research
- * go beyond your supervisor's field of research
- * develop mentoring relationships with other professors

Apply for and obtain funding:

- * begin with small grants or scholarships
- * apply for SNSF programmes (designed for different career levels)
- * apply! apply! and apply again!

Gain experience in the publication process:

- * publish articles and books
- * vary your publications – as first author or as PI (Principal Investigator)
- * become a reviewer for one or more scientific journals
- * take part in an editorial board for one or more journals in your domain.

Be mobile (in several ways):

- * have a research visit abroad
- * vary the types of collaboration you engage in, and the theme of the research
- * show your ability to succeed under new conditions
- * get out of your comfort zone.



THE KEYS OF RECRUITMENT: RESEARCH AND FUNDING

The frequency of your publications in peer-reviewed journals, whether co-authored or unsupervised, will indicate to recruiters your ability to do independent research.

The quantity and quality of your publications gives an indication of your ability to secure funding for a research stay, to organise a conference, and for your research and teaching projects.

The funding of your research is taken as an indication of your ability to be equally successful in your new position.

Emphasise in your motivation letter the complementarity of your research with that of the unit you are applying to, and the connections you can make with the group. This is already the beginning of a link with the recruiting committee (if appropriate, mention concrete common interests).

Avoid highlighting a particular person from the unit you are applying to.

The impact of your work is measured by the prizes and awards you receive, by invitations to presentations, by your presence in the media, by the reach of your activities outside the academic world, by your projects with non-academic institutions and by the number of citations of your work

TEACHING AND MENTORING

Gain teaching experience: develop your expertise in a range of subject areas and methodologies, and at different levels and for different class sizes.

Develop your teaching approach and philosophy:

- * Use a variety of teaching tools, including online
- * Request a consultation with the UNIL Center for Teaching and Learning (CSE)
- * Supervise students and doctoral candidates: know how to delegate tasks and ensure follow-up
- * Mentor junior researchers
- * Recruit research assistants



THE KEYS OF RECRUITMENT: TEACHING AND MENTORING

Your teaching experience is assessed by the degree of responsibility you had (on your own, as an assistant or as a co-leader), the level of study, the year or semester, the number of students per lesson taught, as well as the average grade awarded by students in their evaluation.

Use your teaching evaluation in your cover letter: it will allow you to describe the skills you want students to acquire and how you went about imparting them.

Depending on your teaching experience, emphasise your ability to adapt a course, specify whether you have used specific methods, used to any pedagogical innovations, or taught to a particular audience (for example, in continuing education).

Keep in mind that your teaching philosophy makes explicit the values and beliefs on which your teaching is based.

Mentoring of young researchers or supervision of doctoral candidates provides information on your ability to supervise (indicate the number of doctoral candidates and the year of supervision, the title of their thesis and the name of the other supervisor).

SERVICE ORIENTATION AND INVOLVEMENT IN INSTITUTIONAL LIFE

Participate in committees and commissions (such as recruitment):

- * Learn how institutions and the academic world works
- * Contribute to the common good (be selective – or else you'll be overloaded!)
- * Propose or participate in the organisation of large-scale conferences
- * Communicate with the general public and the media: act as an ambassador for the institution



THE KEYS OF RECRUITMENT: INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRATION

Recruiters want to be sure that you'll contribute to the smooth running of your research unit. Highlight your relevant experience in your application.

Your involvement in the life of the research unit, your faculty or university is visible through your responsibilities or roles (e.g. supervision), your involvement in the organisation of conferences or other events, and your work in committees or associations.

Your ability to work in a team by, for example, mentioning your interdisciplinary collaborations, past experiences of integration in a new workplace, your interest in working with different profiles (such as students and junior researchers).

NETWORKING... IT'S ESSENTIAL!

Every network operates on the basis of exchange. It's constructed from formal and informal exchange between colleagues, within associations, during events, and so on. Moments to relax can also be moments to create friendships – hence their importance.

- * In your institute or lab, at conferences or online... be curious. Take an interest in what others are doing and build collaborative and contributory links.
- * Your network of scientific contacts and collaborations allows you to generate new research projects and exchanges between institutions.
- * Develop your network of contacts to generate new ideas. Innovate, collaborate. Get known and be invited to work with others.
- * Participate in or lead collaborative projects.
- * Propose activities (such as organising a conference). This is a great way to meet people you would like to work with in the future.
- * Keep in touch with your network so that you get the right information at the right time.
- * Don't be shy! You're a researcher – ask people about their careers.
- * An international network is just as important as mobility in a career. Take advantage of social networks and video conferencing to collaborate and maintain links from a distance.



"During my doctorate, I kept an eye on my career by working to establish scientifically interesting collaborations with colleagues and professors. I think what helped me a lot was that I did not hesitate to reach out to professors at conferences. In this way, I was able to network. Some of these encounters have been decisive." A professor at the UAS in Social Work at Fribourg.

Source: unil.ch/graduatecampus > Career with a doctorate > After the



PhD: UNIL Portraits

At the outset of a large-scale collaboration, take the time to plan a face-to-face meeting at the beginning. This gives a concrete dimension to the collaboration and strengthens the commitment of participants in the following months.



BEING VISIBLE ONLINE

The Graduate Campus, the CUSO and Regard provide **workshops on the use of social networks** and the **creation of online profiles**.

unil.ch/graduatecampus > Workshops competences.cuso.ch

unifr.ch/regard

To upload **your publications to open archives (Open Access)**, UNIL provides information on the paths to Open Access and provides advice on how to negotiate embargoes with journal editors.
unil.ch/openscience



THE KEYS FOR RECRUITMENT: NETWORKING AND INFORMATION GATHERING

Networking can enable you to receive relevant and targeted information at the right time (contracts, funding, vacancies, etc.) and thus plays an important role in preparing an application. As each job is different, each application will be different too. Take the time to find out about the institution, faculty, institute, department or lab concerned. Ask around and see whether you can talk to someone who knows about the development of research and teaching in the unit in question.

Avoid contacting members of a recruitment committee at all costs! You can, however, contact the chair of the committee to get answers to your questions. A tip: prepare your questions in advance and ask for a telephone appointment with the person concerned.



WHERE DO YOU NEED TO STRENGTHEN YOUR SKILLS??

And which ones will be key?? To help with your reflection, take a look at the *Unfold Your Future* skills framework available from the Graduate Campus.



Training provided by the Graduate Campus, the CUSO and the Equality Office will help you develop the skills you're interested in.
unil.ch/graduatecampus > Workshops
competences.cuso.ch/
unil.ch/egalite



THE ACADEMIC CAREER: A RISK THAT WON'T BE THE SAME FOR EVERYONE

Depending on their sex, gender, social background or their family responsibilities, the risks involved in the precarity of an academic career won't be the same for everyone. For women or people coming from minority groups, the experience of exclusion, isolation and prejudice can weigh heavily on career advancement. The professional investment required of researchers (overtime, institutional involvement, mobility) and the precarity of working conditions (short-term contracts, low salaries among early career researchers) are factors which can explain the difficulties in reconciling personal and professional lives.



The challenge is especially difficult for women rather than men, as they are often less well supported by their mentors and less well integrated in professional networks. In addition, in today's world, it's still largely women who need to juggle research activities with family obligations. They're also the ones who are most vocal about their fears when it comes to the uncertainties of an academic career.



The UNIL Equality Office provides workshops to identify and act against gender bias, including for members of hiring committees.
unil.ch/egalite > Events and training
> Training

PUT THE BALL ON YOUR SIDE OF THE COURT: RESOURCES

You have an overview of the professional perspectives in higher education, the expectations and the skills required for an academic career. The ball is in your court to work on your professional development and acquire the skills needed for the position you're targeting.



Take advantage of the support and advice provided for women scientists: find out more from the UNIL Equality Office



ACTIONUNI is the umbrella association of the third level associations for early career researchers.
actionuni.ch



How to put together my CV? The Graduate Campus website provides a template for an academic CV.
unil.ch/graduatecampus > Careers with a PhD > The academic career > Support and advice



What type of author, and in what order? The Swiss Academies for Arts and Sciences (2013). *Authorship in scientific publications*. ISBN 798-3-905870-35-0



What are the equivalent roles?

The APAC site provides an explanation and comparison of academic career pathways in Germany, France and the UK.
<https://academiccareersmaps.org/>



Find a mentor. The Réseau romand de mentoring pour femmes provides mentoring programmes for women researchers (find out more from the UNIL Equality Office).
unifr.ch/f-mentoring



GRADUATE CAMPUS, CSE AND REGARD WORKSHOPS, AND OTHER FORMS OF SUPPORT

The REGARD workshops are available for women researchers and professors, with the goal of developing the skills necessary for an academic career.
unifr.ch/regard

The UNIL Equality Office organises the **PROfessional Women with Doctorates (PROWD) programme**, to support career development for postdoc researchers in academia or beyond.
unil.ch/egalite > Egalité femmes-hommes > Soutien aux carrières féminines > Chercheuses

The Tremplin grant provides women researchers with relief from administrative, teaching and mentoring responsibilities for one semester.
unil.ch/egalite > Gender equality > Support for women's careers > Female researchers

The Graduate Campus provides several workshops to develop skills in research, as well as for applications for academic posts.
unil.ch/graduatecampus > Workshops

The UNIL Centre for Teaching and Learning (CSE) provides pedagogical workshops according to the level of supervision and the intended teaching tools.
unil.ch/cse > Nos prestations

A POSTDOC ABROAD

In some scientific disciplines, a postdoc abroad is highly recommended. For others, it's more an advantage. Whatever the situation, the opportunity to discover life and thinking in other departments and other countries can enrich your professional life – as well as dramatically extending your professional network. Here is some advice to keep in mind.

ASSESS YOUR HOST RESEARCH GROUP

Just because the research group boasts an international star and a long list of publications, it doesn't necessarily mean you'll have a good postdoc experience. The working atmosphere also plays an important role. The best way to find out what the working atmosphere is like is to make a short exploratory visit, and talk with the head of the group and other members of the team. It can be very useful to make contact with local associations for early career researchers and ask them specific questions – to get an idea of the atmosphere and how the team works, as well as for more practical aspects (current salaries, possible funding, working conditions, etc.).

ASSESS THE SALARY OR GRANT

There are differences in the salary for a postdoc between countries. You need to keep in mind nevertheless the advantages and disadvantages in terms of social coverage – such as health insurance and the cost of living in the area. It also pays to find out more about the possibilities of supplementing your salary with local funding, and whether there are any bilateral agreements between your home and destination countries.

FINDING A JOB ON YOUR RETURN

The more you remain visible, the less you'll risk being forgotten during your absence. More experienced researchers advise you to promote your thesis before you leave – for example, by making as many links as possible with research groups, by offering to present your results to them, and by participating at conferences.

It's very important to maintain these relationships during your absence. You can do that by proposing a collaboration, writing an article with a previous colleague, or keeping up informal contacts.



LEAVING AS A COUPLE OR WITH FAMILY

When it comes to family reunification, we recommend that you find out about the practices in place in your destination country and institution. Some institutions will have measures to promote the mobility of couples where both partners are engaged in an academic career ("dual career couples"). In most countries where a visa is required, you will need to be married to each other so that your partner can benefit from a visa for a long-term stay. Some visas prohibit the spouse from working, or only allow them to work under certain conditions. Discuss the situation with your destination institution when negotiating a postdoc in order to find out what solutions can facilitate your partner's stay and professional integration. Consider also discussing family aspects: if you have children, find out about childcare, schooling and medical insurance.

SOCIAL PROTECTIONS AND INSURANCE

It is strongly advisable to check your health and accident insurance coverage, especially in the case of a postdoc in the USA or Japan.

SNSF grants have special tax and social security requirements. Grants for junior and senior researchers are tax-free and do not involve social security contributions. These particularities have an impact when your return to Switzerland, in particular on your taxation and on your rights to unemployment insurance.

snsf.ch/ > [Funding](#) > [Find funding scheme](#)
> [Postdoc.Mobility](#)



RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

More and more academic institutions are putting in place guidelines that define the rights and obligations of the postdoctoral researcher and their supervisor(s). The *European Charter for Researchers* and the *Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers* include general principles that specify the role, rights and duties of researchers and hiring authorities.
euraxess.ec.europa.eu/ > [Jobs & Funding](#) > [Charter & Code for Researchers](#)



SITES PROVIDING CENTRALISED ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON POSTDOCS IN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

Mailing lists, the websites of academic institutions and faculties, as well as social media and scientific journals are excellent sources for information on open competitions. Your own network as well as that of your supervisor(s) and thesis jury will play a very important role in this respect, as they can help you assess the quality of the postdoc on offer.

[EURAXESS](https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/) includes job and funding opportunities and practical information by EU country. It also includes links to the US, Japan and China.
euraxess.ec.europa.eu/

[Academic Pathways Across Countries \(APAC\)](#) compares and describes the academic career in Germany, France and the UK. The site provides a glossary of institutional terms use in academic research.
academiccareermaps.org

My Science
myscience.ch/fr/jobs_and_careers/search

Nature Careers
nature.com/naturecareers

ResearchGate
researchgate.net

[The Professor Is In](#) provides advice on careers with a doctorate, especially in North America.
theprofessorisin.com

[The National Postdoctoral Association](#) has information on postdocs in the USA.
nationalpostdoc.org > [NPA Resources](#) > [Resource Library](#) > [International > International Postdoc Survival Guide](#)

[Where to stay?](#) Be creative. Try, for example, temporary housing exchanges between academic staff.
homelink.org

profvac.com (a site especially for people in research and teaching)
trocmaison.com

KNOWING HOW TO PRESENT YOURSELF: THE TOOLBOX

The academic application file is a set of verifiable information on the activities and scientific production of a researcher. Clearly stating the key points in your application (research and funding, teaching, scientific influence and integration in the institution) will facilitate the work of recruiters – which they will greatly appreciate.

In a competition for a professorship, the profile and areas of activity are defined on the basis of the objectives and priorities of the institution or faculty, and the needs of the discipline concerned. The profile of the position may be defined very broadly or very narrowly, which may lead potential candidates to 'self-deselect'. The criteria may on the other hand change during the procedure, depending on the applications received.



If you think you're qualified and have a strong case, don't hesitate to apply, even if you don't respond 100% to all of the requirements.

As a general rule, and depending on the institution concerned, the application file is composed of the following elements:

- * The cover letter containing solid arguments that the recruitment committee can easily identify to be in your favour.
- * The curriculum vitae that clearly presents the crucial information organised by section.
- * The research statement that describes your vision for research and the work you intend to do.
- * The teaching philosophy statement is more and more frequently required. It describes your approach as a teacher, your goals and your potential contribution to teaching programmes.
- * Three to five of your most important publications (as PDF).
- * Five referees.
- * Recommendation letters.

This file will play a fundamental role throughout the different stages of an academic career. It's what will be evaluated first during any nomination or stabilisation procedures, and also plays an important role for funding applications.

THE CV AND COVER LETTER

Think carefully about the structure and content of your CV and cover letter whenever you apply for any position or funding opportunity.

Both documents need to highlight the elements that show that you have the right skills in research, teaching, funding and integration, and that they are well adapted to the role in question.

Your publications list should be structured in sections as pertinent: articles published in peer-reviewed journals, book chapters, monographs, conference proceedings, etc. It's also important to highlight articles published in top-level journals. Quite often, the advice is to put an asterisk in front of the most important articles – you can do this even if it's not requested. Additionally, your doctoral thesis should be very visible.

It may be necessary to give a full and detailed list of the courses you have taught, specifying the level (Bachelor, Master, etc.) and the type of teaching (year-long course, semester, seminar, practical work, online, etc.). It's also important to clearly mention the courses you plan to teach.

The CV and cover letter must describe your professional and scientific career path. You should make the coherence clear and justify any detours or breaks. The career path should also show the prospects for development.

Additionally, you should avoid vague and general statements. Take the time to find out about the institution and other research groups, and think about potential collaborations, for example.

It's also very important to be familiar with the main rules of the institution you are applying to, and of the country concerned.



Take part in a recruitment committee in your faculty. You'll have privileged access to the recruitment process as well as giving you the opportunity to contribute to the scientific community. Find out more from your faculty office on how you can participate as a representative of early career researchers.

THE RESEARCH STATEMENT

The research statement provides the recruitment committee with detailed information about your past, present and future research. Rather than a narrative of all the research projects you have undertaken, it is a statement of your background and identity as a researcher. It describes your current goals and where you are heading, and the relevance and importance of your work. The research statement should not be confused with the research proposal, which will be required when you apply for funding.

To be convincing, your research statement needs to be relevant and engage the members of the recruitment committee. In the areas of science and technology (STEM), this means three to ten pages, depending on how advanced you are. In the human and social sciences, it's more like a two-page document.

Don't hesitate to ask for support from your research advisor as well as the help of colleagues in your scientific field.

UNIL Research Advisors: unil.ch/researcher/Contact > [Faculty](#)

THE TEACHING PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

The teaching philosophy statement is required during the recruitment and contract renewal phases. A one- to two-page document, it gives you the opportunity to express your values and beliefs about university teaching, while demonstrating their application in your practice and experience as a teacher.

Your teaching philosophy statement will accompany you throughout your career and will evolve with your experience and self-reflection. It should illustrate your progress in terms of teaching skills and knowledge, based on quantitative and qualitative data gathered during your career. This statement complements the CV and cover letter by giving detail to your teaching skills and your adaptability to the university and faculty context.

The following elements should be included in a complete teaching philosophy statement:

- * your principles and values for university teaching
- * a reflection on your practice
- * clarification of the relationship and expectations between you and your students
- * concrete illustrations and documentation of your practice
- * perspectives on your professional development as a teacher in the relevant context

You'll get more advice from the Teaching and Learning Center (CSE). They can also provide you with a review of your teaching philosophy statement.

unil.ch/cse



GENDER AND DIVERSITY BIAS IN PROCESSING APPLICATIONS

Recruiting without discrimination is a legal obligation, but also a matter of institutional efficiency: only by recruiting equally can the best person be found for a given role. Article 8 of the Federal Constitution prohibits discrimination based on gender, origin, social status or disability, among others. The Federal Law on Equality between Women and Men ("LEg" in French) gives concrete form to the prohibition of gender-based discrimination in the workplace, in all aspects of the employment relationship, from recruitment onwards.

Despite an anti-discriminatory legal framework, and despite the progress already made, the professional world in general and the academic world in particular, are still marked by obstacles to equal recruitment. Stereotypes are rife, whether based on gender, ethnic origin, sexual or affective orientation, gender identity, or physical or mental disability. It is important to be aware of this and to counteract these stereotypes, by drawing on existing good practice and tools to ensure equality throughout the recruitment process.

For more information on equality in the recruitment process and the UNIL policy of non-discrimination: unil.ch/egalite/ > [Equality at the University of Lausanne](#) > [Equality in recruitment](#)

A CAREER BEYOND THE UNIVERSITY

- * **Off to explore!**

- » What's my profile?
- » Which universe would I like to discover?
- » How to put together my toolbox?

- * **Make yourself lisible!**

- » How can I convince an employer of my doctoral or postdoctoral experience?
- » So what if I apply only for advertised positions?

- * **Make yourself visible!**

OFF TO EXPLORE!



As you read in the introductory chapters of this guide: a career beyond the university for doctorate holders is anything but the exception, or even a distant alternative. Depending on the scientific domain, up to two-thirds of doctorate holders will leave the path leading to professorship – and for many different reasons. That said, a “typical” pathway outside of academia isn’t often the case, whatever the person’s disciplinary background.

Additionally, the prejudice on both sides (whether within academia or that of employers beyond it) can often be negative, and it’s rare to find non-academic job offers with a specific requirement for the doctorate. This makes it all the more complicated to find a suitable post. For a doctorate holder used to the academic world, it can be difficult to imagine themselves elsewhere.

But there is good news! The transition has been made – and successfully – by a large number of doctorate holders. And there is support to help them get where they want to go.



DISCOVER THE PORTRAITS OF UNIL PHDS

On the Graduate Campus website, you’ll find interviews with examples of career paths, information and advice on how to use your skills outside academia.

unil.ch/graduatecampus > Careers with a PhD > After the PhD: UNIL portraits

Before you begin to think about putting together your CV, we strongly recommend you learn about the differences between the academic and beyond-academic worlds. Employers may well be much more interested in your transversal skills than your scientific expertise and will be impressed by your knowledge and understanding of their domain of activity. It’s also about the ability to speak confidently about yourself, to talk about your motivations and present your achievements clearly and positively – less about trying to “sell yourself.”



As for the academic career, the challenge remains the same: to know your own value, to understand the context of the role, and to activate and expand your professional network.

Whatever the direction you wish to take (an academic career or other professional choices), the preparation will be the same: knowing well who you are, and asking yourself questions about your skills, your motivations and your interests.

WHAT’S MY PROFILE?

How will you talk about yourself, your strengths and weaknesses, your motivations and achievements? In what terms will you present yourself to future employers? Beyond “PhD”, what’s your professional identity? What will you choose... Analyst? Writer? Data manager?

The answer to this question can be found in the skills assessment. This brings together a reflection on your interests and experiences, an inventory of your successes and the scale of your work in qualitative and/or quantitative terms. Start this work well before you sit down to write your CV.

WHICH UNIVERSE WOULD I LIKE TO DISCOVER?

For many early career researchers, the university is the only well-known professional environment. Sometimes it’s even difficult to conceive of other career paths – in the context of a (relatively!) clear path to professorship, it can be a challenge to conceive a route that’s unfamiliar and much less distinct. But others have already been there: so put on your researcher’s hat, light up your natural curiosity, and dare to step out of your comfort zone.

What are the biases or prejudices you hold on to about roles beyond academic research? What’s holding you back from taking your first steps? What are the organisations or companies, roles, functions and areas you’re missing information on?

This is where networking and information gathering will be so important. Who can you talk with to learn more? Could these people put you in contact with professionals or the company you’re interested in? What are the websites or the industry journals that could give you more information? What are the other resources available to you?

You have two objectives in your efforts: the first, to get information to help you make a better decision and secondly, to familiarise yourself with the language and dynamics of the field, all while building relationships with people beyond the university.



WATCH OUT!

The point of information gathering at this stage is not to uncover the hidden fabulous job opportunity. Forget the question: “will this person hire me?”. You’re on a discovery mission in an as-yet unknown universe. If you discover a job opportunity, that’s fantastic. But the priority here will be to deepen and broaden your knowledge. And on the way, you will begin to better understand yourself – and get to know more people who will send you to meet still others in an area that interests that you, and who one day may need you, or simply be able to inform you about a role or an activity.



A PhD from the HEC at UNIL wanted to find out more about the roles beyond academic research that could correspond with her profile. She didn’t hesitate to contact an employer who interested her in order to find out more. “I realised that there are offices that carry out empirical studies on behalf of the cantons and various organisations. I asked if I could talk to one of these

offices to learn about what they do... I had a talk with lovely people who gave me a warm welcome and who told me about their work. At the end of this discussion, which I greatly appreciated, I sent an unsolicited application, which led to a job offer.”

A scientific project manager in the field of health.

Source : unil.ch/graduatecampus > Careers with a PhD > After the PhD: UNIL Portraits



UNIL ALUMNI NETWORK (RÉSEAU ALUMNIL)

The ALUMNIL network is an opportunity to learn about different professional pathways and to network. It lists the different ALUMNIL associations by faculty. Don’t forget the UNIL Docteur·e·s community, which provides an opportunity to maintain and develop your network of PhDs.

wp.unil.ch/alumnil/

HOW TO PUT TOGETHER MY TOOLBOX?

As soon as you’ve started to get to know your target field better, you can start preparing your toolbox. This is not just about preparing your CV and cover letter, and sending them in response to any remotely appropriate job ad. Other elements will be important: your knowledge of the employer and of the role on offer, your capacity to present yourself well during a hiring interview, your profile on on-line professional networks, and above all, your self-knowledge: your strengths, weaknesses, your motivations and your aspirations for the future.

Take stock of your skills, your interests and your motivations (see the chapter above). With this knowledge, you’ll be more able to convince a potential employer of your suitability for the job in question.

MAKE YOURSELF LISIBLE

THE “TRADITIONAL” APPLICATION: PREPARE PROPERLY

Eureka! You’ve spotted an ad for your dream job! Congratulations!

Lots of applicants who find themselves in this situation will immediately pull out the latest version of the application file, adjust a few details (the addressee’s name and address) and send it all – two minutes before midnight, on the day of the deadline. Don’t be one of them...

ANALYSING THE JOB AD

Today’s employer wants to make sure that every candidate has some basic information and knows why they want to work in this role for this employer.

To begin with, study the employer in question. What is their activity? What is the size of the organisation? Its form? Its working culture? What are the current issues in the industry?

Then, ask yourself about the role advertised. What are the typical profiles of people who hold this type of role? What are the key words in the ad, as well as those used by the organisation or people who work in it (e.g. on online profiles)?

Now evaluate your profile! How well do you meet the advertised criteria and the tasks requested? From what you understand about the organisation, how could you contribute to the organisation and the role, perhaps in an unexpected way? What makes you stand out? What motivates you – in the job description as well as about the organisation?



For a job you’re really interested in, it can be helpful to **create a simple table**, with one column for the employer’s expectations, a column for the element in your experience that corresponds to each criterion (with the relevant qualities and figures), and a final column for what motivates you in the skill or knowledge, and/or your particular asset. This analysis will give you a basis for writing your CV and cover letter, and will help you to be better prepared if you’re invited to an interview.



READING THE JOB AD AS A PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED.

Employers recruit out of necessity: **recruiters expect that you will be able to solve their problems. On the basis of your skills and outcomes (the impact of your thesis, your contracts, projects, etc.), they will deduce your capacity to solve their problems.**

The criteria concerning the personal profile, education and other specificities are used by HR to assess whether your application meets the objectives, responsibilities and tasks of the job. If you meet 70-80% of the given criteria, apply! The job description is often more demanding than the actual job requirements, as HR is often looking for someone who can adapt to future variations in the job description.



Given your experience and expertise as a doctorate holder, your profile is suitable for positions of responsibility in lower or middle management.

PREPARING YOUR APPLICATION

The standard application in Switzerland will traditionally include a CV, a cover letter, copies of certificates and diplomas, and work certificates (see below). Today, many employers only require a CV and cover letter. Sometimes, they won’t even ask for a letter, but rather a statement of your motivations – during the application or the interview. Everyone expects an application to be adapted to their organisation and the position!

- * So what are the key words you should use in your CV? How do you best to talk about your motivations for this position?
- * What are the norms for the application? In a major multinational, the expectations of form and content can be very different to those for a small local company.
- * How do you see yourself contributing to the company? What is your particular strength, relative to their needs? (You’ll only be able to answer this question by doing some research beforehand!)



HOW TO PREPARE MY CV OR MY COVER LETTER?

Check out the various “careers” pages on the Graduate Campus website, where we have advice and training on the topic.
unil.ch/graduatecampus > Workshops > Develop your career

unil.ch/graduatecampus > Careers with a PhD > Careers Beyond Academia



DON'T FORGET THE DATA!

Just as you would provide solid arguments for an article in a scientific journal, any skill you include in your cover letter needs to be backed up by the evidence of experience. Give examples of situations where you have had the experience, and give details in terms of quantitative or qualitative measures, the projects you have accomplished and/or the impact of your work.



HOW IS AN "ORDINARY" CV DIFFERENT TO AN "ACADEMIC" CV?

The academic CV is very different to a CV adapted to alternative posts. Consequently, you'll need to pay particular attention to each type. The "ordinary" CV is much shorter (one or two pages, depending on the employer) and more concise, including the sentences (which are often in the form of bullet points). Moreover, the CV in this context is focused on results and achievements, skills and professional experience. In order to reduce your content down to 1-2 pages in an ordinary CV, you'll need to carefully choose the elements, use known key words, and think carefully about the employer's needs.



THE SWISS WORK CERTIFICATE

The work certificate (also called the "employment certificate", or less accurately, the "reference letter") is an important part of an application in Switzerland. It shouldn't be confused with a recommendation (or reference) letter, which is more personalised and aimed solely at the recruitment of a person. The work certificate attests to the nature and the duration of the employment relationship, as well as to the quality of your work and your behaviour (Article 330a of the Civil Code). The certificate should be truthful and be worded benevolently.

[ch.ch](https://www.ch.ch) the information portal of the Swiss authorities

[ch.ch > Work > Reference letter](https://www.ch.ch/en/work/reference-letter)

Human Resources at UNIL
[unil.ch/srh](https://www.unil.ch/srh)

HOW CAN I CONVINCE AN EMPLOYER OF MY DOCTORAL OR POSTDOCTORAL EXPERIENCE?

If you talk about your experience as a researcher, your intelligence will certainly be impressive... but what about your ability as member of a team? Here are some tips to help you convince a potential employer:

1. Talk about your research in the terms of a project rather than as science: the organisation and the team, the milestones and deadlines, the budget and schedule

2. Talk about solutions to problems, rather than focusing only on the problem: the ability to deal with a complex and difficult situation and to identify solutions
3. Talk about quantifiable results: what you have developed and its impact in terms of percentages, savings and time
4. Talk about your influence and leadership (not necessarily hierarchical): how you managed to convince your colleagues that your approach was the right one



So, well, yeah, I did my thesis on the symbolic capital of cloth merchants in Porto in the eighteenth century...



Working on my own and as part of a team? Of course. I managed my research project independently over 4 years. And in my teaching role, I worked as part of a team.



SO WHAT IF I APPLY ONLY FOR ADVERTISED POSITIONS?

Large companies have multi-stage recruitment processes with specific assessments and requirements. The competition is tough, because these organisations are very visible and offer good working conditions. The standard recruitment process, with an externally advertised job, formal receipt of applications and recruitment interviews, only represents however one route to being hired.

Anyone looking for employment (whether they're a PhD or not!) is faced with a paradox. For the applicant, the easiest thing to do, in terms of time and confidence, is to send an application in response to a job ad. Even if writing the cover letter seems difficult, they won't have to come into direct contact with another human being (and thus risk rejection...). What's more, this approach takes a lot less time than networking!

However, for the recruiter, applications received from a job ad represent a very high risk: hiring someone on the basis of known experience will always have a much higher value. The recruiter's thinking is often: if I don't have the financial resources to take on a long process of assessing the best applicants, with days taken up by recruitment specialists, my preference will be for a known person – whether I known them personally, or someone I trust.

Source: The risk for the employer relative to that of the applicant, after Bolles (2018), What Color is your parachute?

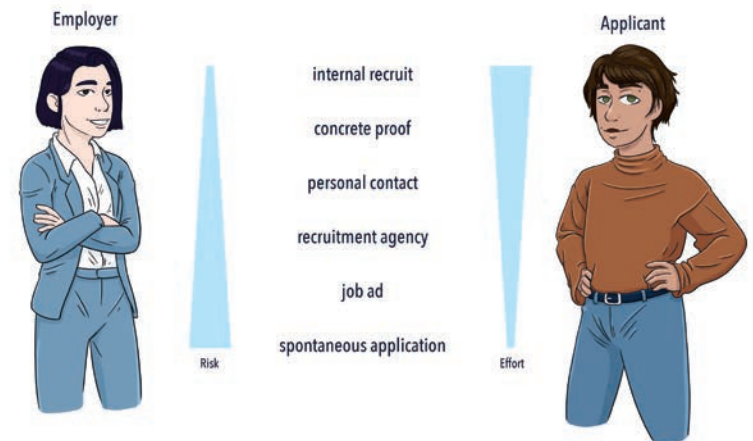
Instead of a risky and costly process in terms of financial, time and human resources, many employers prefer to reduce their costs by hiring known people. This is the case for most small- and medium-sized companies in Switzerland. Small companies have few vacancies and recruit through networking. It's important for them that the people they recruit are versatile. Medium-sized companies have a turnover of about 10-15% per year and have needs for expertise. The difficulty is in finding these (not very visible) companies.

- * So be prepared to expand your professional network. A word of recommendation from within the organisation can be very valuable. A small mandate can lead to a long-term job offer. And a position advertised only internally (or at least in advance of a public ad) may ease recruitment.



HOW ABOUT UNSOLICITED APPLICATIONS?

An unsolicited (or spontaneous) application – which means sending your CV to a potential employer in the absence of a job ad – is certainly possible. And very often, it's closely linked to networking (see the testimony above!). The first step is to do the groundwork: know the employer and their environment, understand their business and identify how you might respond to a problem they are unable to solve.



The most reliable forms of recruitment for the employer are the opposite in terms of effort for the applicant!

MAKE YOURSELF VISIBLE!

Your online presence – and your presence on social media – have become very important.

It's not about preparing to be contacted by recruiters through your LinkedIn account, in the manner of a headhunter. If a doctorate holder is sometimes contacted by a recruitment agency in this way, it's very often an agency that is trying to expand their database. Headhunting is mostly done on very experienced profiles, and you could expect this kind of contact in ten or twenty years, when you will have acquired a lot more senior-level experience!

On the other hand, an online presence is useful to broaden the possibilities of finding information, make connections, be aware of what's going on in your field, be visible and have more interaction. Social networks are tools: they will not do the networking for you, but they can provide you with information about people, functions, companies... and be a source of information about yourself for those you contact.



Some social networks will indicate the degree of proximity between you and the person you're looking for (up to third degree). This indication will help you understand who you have in common who could put you in direct contact with the person you're looking for.

Sites like LinkedIn and Xing are professional online networks that will allow you to develop your contacts and provide information on organisations and companies. In an academic career, ResearchGate, Academia.edu and PublicationsList are more well-known options. The distinction isn't very binary: many researchers have a LinkedIn account, while ResearchGate is known to scientists working in the private sector. Other social networks, such as Twitter or Instagram, can be useful for developing your research and your public profile.

An online profile will give you some visibility as soon as you start to reach out to others. Think about what others will find when they search for your name online. Is your only visibility that of the lab photo, or (worse!) at a party? If you have created a profile on a professional network, what information is available on your page?



Include a link to your online profile in your email signature and on your CV. This will allow anyone you contact to find out more about your professional profile and get an idea of your potential.

The use of online networks is now commonplace for any professional beyond academia and is becoming more and more widespread in the academic environment. Once you're ready to create your profile, look out for good advice to better create your content.



The Graduate Campus and the CUSO provide **workshops on using social networks and on creating your online profile**.
unil.ch/graduatecampus > Workshops.competences.cuso.ch



Using social media such as Twitter or Instagram will make your activities more visible: if you want to develop a public profile for scientific communication, for example, this kind of account is just about mandatory. It's also a way to publicise your scientific projects.



TAKE ON THE ROLE OF TEACHER AND CONFERENCE SPEAKER

A new audience is in front of you – people who aren't expert in your domain; nor are they used to your working environment. How would you describe your experience and skills to them so that they can understand them as your strengths?



Don't forget the gap analysis

and think about the experience and projects that you could develop before the end of your doctorate or postdoc contract. What skills and interests could you strengthen? What aspects of your research could represent an interest for society? Beyond the campus, what associations or volunteering activity, training or hobbies could help you develop your skills as well as your network?



Don't forget French and German!

For many roles in Switzerland, good knowledge in French and/or German will be essential (level B2 or more, depending on the employer). Even if the work itself only needs you to speak English, the fact that you can speak with your colleagues in the local language will be a huge advantage. It will also be evidence of your ability to adapt to local environments.

If you still have time before the end of your contract, consider strengthening your ability with the help of the Language Center, the EFLE, or with a Tandem partner.

unil.ch/cdl

unil.ch/efle/cours-satellites

unil.ch/tandem



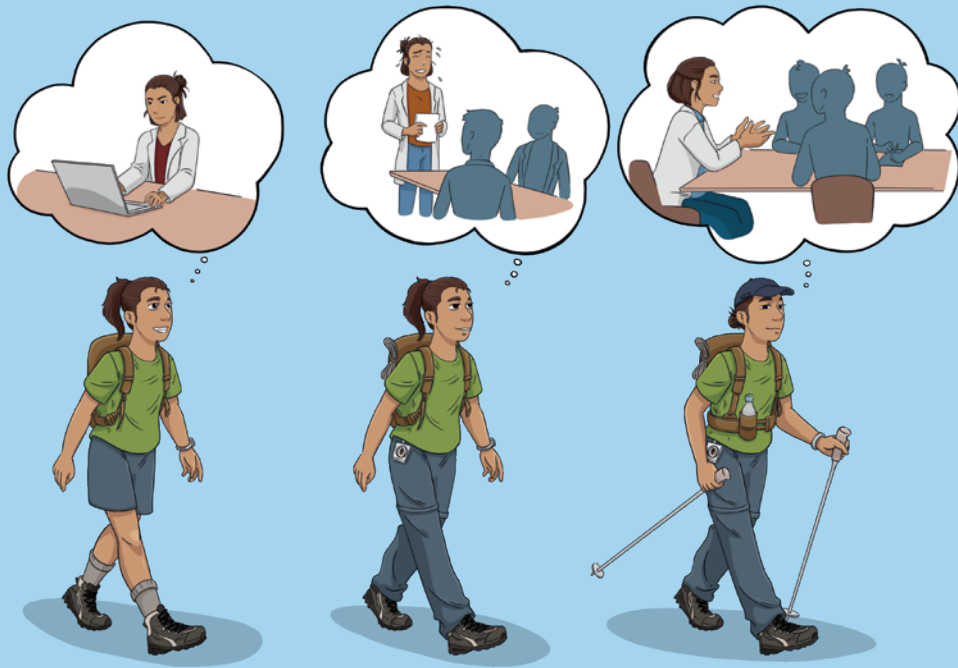
NETWORKING AND SUPPORTING PROFESSIONAL WOMEN IN SWITZERLAND

[Femdat](http://femdat.ch/) is a jobs and networking portal for highly-qualified women.
femdat.ch/

[Sheknows](http://sheknows.ch) collects profiles of women experts in all domains.
sheknows.ch

The [Medienfrauen](http://medienfrauen.ch) association focuses on women working in the media and in communication science.
medienfrauen.ch

ON TO THE NEXT STEPS: KEY SKILLS



- * How to make the best decision?
- * Networking, or, asking for directions
- * Negotiation: the art of reaching an agreement
- * Adaptation: managing the transition to a new role
 - » Between academia and industry, what changes?
- * Keep a balance between private lives and professional paths
- * Continuing development: mentorship

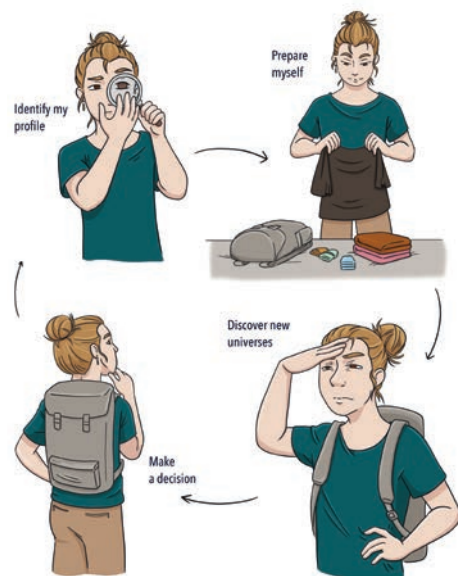
HOW TO MAKE THE BEST DECISION?

The more you know yourself, the more you'll be able to identify a sector of employment or a role that's best adapted to you. The more you've understood the sectors and roles you're most interested in, the better you'll be able to set your goals of professional development. And finally, the more you get involved in building your strengths, the more clearly you'll be able to identify your interests and motivations.

It's not always easy to make a decision about your career development, and sometimes it's necessary to close some doors in order for others to open. It can be particularly hard when we have been strongly invested in an academic career and slowly come to the realisation that despite our best efforts, it's unlikely to happen for us – and for reasons that have nothing to do with the quality of our work.

We each have choices in our professional lives, a potential that could take us down any of several different paths – many of them valuable and satisfying in their own ways. Sometimes, we need to accept and live with our decisions and not live in the conditional (if I had..., I could have...).

Rather than thinking in terms of binary choices (the academic or non-academic career, professorship or R&D, scientific communication or high-school teaching), we encourage you to remain open to the choices that are open to you. Dare to take a step beyond your comfort zone, take a journey towards new horizons – by asking questions of people who could give you ideas on career possibilities, by reading websites, by developing side projects in parallel with your thesis or postdoc project.



AND IF I LEAVE ACADEMIA, WILL IT BE POSSIBLE TO COME BACK LATER?

For some scientific disciplines, it is possible to return to an academic career after leaving it for several years (for a role in the UAS system, it's even highly appreciated). For other disciplines however, a return can be complicated, especially in situations where the state of the art is in rapid growth and there's stiff competition between researchers. That said, the Vitae organisation's study "What do researcher staff do next?" of ex-postdocs in Europe showed that 75% of those who had left the academic career were very satisfied with their current role, and that only 18% of those who would have imagined returning to an academic career were now ready to do so.

- * « What do research staff do next? » Vitae (2016). Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC) Ltd.

SO IS IT FAILURE OR BETRAYAL IF I HEAD ELSEWHERE?

The idea of leaving the academic career can sometimes be perceived as a "failure" to live up to its standards, or even as a form of "betrayal" of the academic community. This feeling can be reinforced by those we work with, who may even have their own doubts or fears, or different constraints and opportunities.

The figures provided at the beginning of this guide give an objective view of the challenges and difficulties of successfully becoming a professor from a purely statistical point of view. The Federal Statistics Office, which compiles these figures every other year, continues to show that the chances of obtaining a permanent contract and a role with responsibility are much higher outside academic research. The choice to pursue a career beyond the university can be positive, and as studies in Switzerland and around the world show, it can also be just as (and sometimes even more!) enriching – for intellectual, financial or personal reasons. It's in part why at the Graduate Campus we decided to create the series of portraits of UNIL PhDs: to show how doctorate holders can find professional fulfilment in a wide range of sectors.

Reading these portraits, meeting with colleagues who are going through the same process (often through workshops such as those offered by the CUSO, Regard or the Graduate Campus), finding support through coaching or counselling, are all excellent ways to handle these feelings of failure or betrayal. At the end of the day, you are the best person to make the best choice for yourself in your own context, given what interests and motivates you, and your strengths and your goals.

unil.ch/graduatecampus > Careers with a PhD > After the thesis: UNIL portraits

NETWORKING, OR, ASKING FOR DIRECTIONS

Many researchers say that networking isn't for them. Some, for example, consider it to be a form of commercial relationship, or underestimate its value. In reality, networking is about supporting each other. It's about establishing contacts and systematically and reciprocally maintaining relationships, with a goal of exchange as much as promoting your own interests. Rest assured, everyone needs information, not just you, and the only way to get that information is to share with others. And this applies to the academic career, as much as it does to any other.

The authors of *Designing Your Life*, Bill Burnett and Dave Evans, suggest that you think of "asking for directions" – just as you would if you were on a street and unsure of where to go. Keep in mind that as a general rule, human beings love to help.

- * Bill Burnett & Dave Evans, *Designing Your Life: How to build a well-lived, joyful life*. Knopf 2016



"I felt I didn't know how to network. But I did it without realizing it. The contacts with people I met during the PhD (for example at the Doctoral School or at conferences) were decisive in the construction of my career path."

A PhD from UNIL FBM, now a researcher at the International Center for Cancer Research

Source: unil.ch/graduatecampus > Careers with a PhD > After the thesis: UNIL portraits

Your network is an important resource for information, especially for your next professional steps. Concretely, your network can serve to:

- * Obtain and disseminate targeted information
- * Put you in touch with people you would like to meet or collaborate with
- * Show that you are recognised by a network of people at particular stages of your career
- * Give you support during an application process, or even be hired without one



When someone internal to the organisation sends your name to a colleague, or even suggests you for a particular role, they're putting their own reputation on the line. They're giving recruiters positive feedback on your abilities and implying that they see in you the qualities to succeed in a position.

Developing your network, and above maintaining it, means you need to be active, to make contact, take the initiative and get involved:

- * Distribute information
- * Act as a bridge between people
- * Inform others about what you're doing and propose collaborative projects
- * Don't neglect the informal aspects of networking activities



Communicate what you're looking for to your network of contacts. If you don't, how will they know?

You have particular needs or interests, such as finding a job or a contract, starting a business or building up your research unit. Depending on your goal, take a look at your existing networks (professional, private, volunteering, hobbies or any other): do you know what your friends and acquaintances do, or where they work? Some of them may also know people in roles or employment sectors that interest you.

When you engage in a conversation with someone in your first or second level network, keep in mind the following:

NEGOTIATION: THE ART OF REACHING AN AGREEMENT

- * Look for the big picture in order to identify your questions: what's your goal? What are the roles and sectors you'd like to know more about? What are some of the current issues in particular sectors? What kinds of problems do organisations or businesses have, and what kinds of skills and expertise do they need?
- * Ask questions that are open and lead to more information (how, who, what, where...). You're a researcher: put your natural curiosity to work!
- * Research the basic information before you reach out or meet with someone: learn about their professional background (take a look at their online profile!) and a few key topics in their employment sector, in order to have some initial points of conversation.
- * Take care of the technical aspects: know how to present yourself confidently, manage the information you receive and the time that's available for the conversation.
- * Remember to thank anyone who provides their time and expertise (a quick note after meeting them is always appreciated), send them information you think they'd find interesting (a scientific or press article, for example), and depending on the nature of the contact, send them an occasional update.

Negotiation happens everywhere and all the time. What changes is what you're negotiating about, and the stakes for you and for the other party. A negotiation is a way to obtain something you want from others who can provide it. The good news is that negotiations are rarely a zero-sum game: most of the time, both sides can come out ahead.

Take the case of postdoc positions. Don't hesitate to negotiate your contract, to propose various solutions according to your professional and personal needs. Maître assistants (MA) have managed to institutionalise support measures in some faculties: they can obtain an adjustment of their working hours (a "reduced teaching load") in the last year of their contract so that they can dedicate more time to developing their scientific dossier.

To avoid being overwhelmed by demands on your time, clarify your commitments and your needs with your supervisor(s) and with those around you. Have the courage to (re-)negotiate your job description as soon as possible.

As noted above, you are negotiating in order to satisfy interests. To know what and how to negotiate, you need first to inform yourself, and then to prepare:

- * What is your main objective or interest? What are your secondary objectives and interests?
- * What do you think the main and secondary interests are of the other

person? If you don't know, ask them open-ended questions – and listen to their answers (arguments, concerns, feelings, etc.). Don't rush this stage, as this may hinder your exchange.

- * Think too about fallback positions and their concrete application, if negotiation isn't possible. If the alternative is closer to your interests than what you could achieve by negotiating, then don't negotiate.

A classic example is the recruitment process. In the academic environment, the margin to negotiate the salary may well be small, but you can ensure that you receive sufficient resources with which to do your research (a lab, machines, an installation budget, the number of assistant positions, etc.). In the employment market beyond academia, the doctorate and postdoc are not always recognised de facto in salary calculations. It's thus up to you to highlight the acquired skills and professional experience you bring. Structured arguments and examples of achievements will give you a better position when negotiating your employment conditions.



Preparation leads to more confidence and the ability to find the best solution for you and the person you're negotiating with. It may seem silly, but practicing in front of a mirror can help to make your verbal and non-verbal language more coherent, and thus strengthen your message.



It's not just the salary that makes a role more fulfilling. Some employers may simply not be able to provide more salary but could be open to other solutions. A yearly train pass, perhaps, the possibility to count the hours worked while in the train, or additional training... there are many different ideas people come up with to make their lives a little easier, and they're solutions that employers can be happy to agree to.



The Graduate Campus and the CUSO provide workshops on negotiation and on networking, face-to-face and online.
unil.ch/graduatecampus > Workshops
competences.cuso.ch

ADAPTATION: MANAGING THE TRANSITION TO A NEW ROLE

Once you've started your new role and joined your new employer, you'll have a new set of objectives. It's time to plan for the first few days and months: to integrate into the workplace and the group of colleagues, to set goals in terms of results and for your professional development.

A few key pieces of advice, above all (but not only!) in the case of a transition to a career beyond academic research:

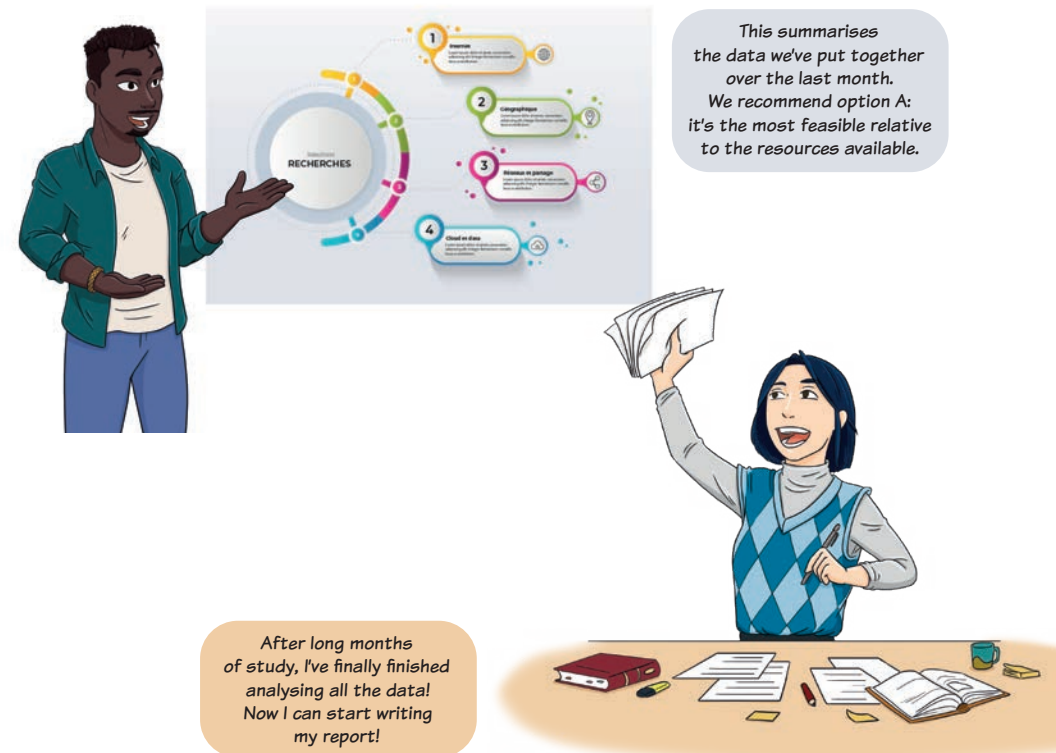
- * Observe and build new working relationships: take the time to understand the environment, the organisational culture (how things are done), who are the key people you need to speak with (quick tip: it won't just be your new supervisor!). Suggest a coffee break with a new colleague. Accept invitations to lunch. And ask questions! Open questions will always give you more information.
- * Be patient with yourself: you have been hired because you have specific strengths. Be confident in your ability to learn and grow in your role.
- * Be humble and ask questions: don't try to be the expert. You've been hired – even though you've never worked in exactly this role or in this organisation! You don't need to do it all by yourself, and you will better impress your new colleagues by respecting their expertise.
- * Stay focused on potential solutions and what you'll do differently next

time, more than on the error itself. As a researcher, you are trained to be critical and to reflect: if you overdo it, you risk alienating your colleagues. And in industry, decision-making and the courage to move forward are valued: we'll try the solution that's 90% perfect, and make it better with what we've learnt.

You can create your own "strategic career journal", where you make a note of:

- * Your observations and reflections on your new environment: the people, the activities, the behaviours, the ways of doing things which intrigue you and the questions you'd like to ask your colleagues. All too often, the activities or the methods we encounter in a new organisation can seem illogical or inefficient. And very often, there are reasons to explain why things are done the way they are – reasons that you haven't understood yet!
- * Your observations on yourself: what are the two or three major obstacles for you in this post? Where are you feeling less strong in your work? How could you find a solution to these problems, and when? With a quick online training course for example, or by reading a specialist book, you can very quickly feel more at ease in your new role.

Remember that your new job won't be forever. Your role will evolve, and so will you. Develop a habit of continuous self-reflection and learn to maintain your autonomy in your professional development.





KEEP A BALANCE BETWEEN PRIVATE LIVES AND PROFESSIONAL PATHS

BETWEEN ACADEMIA AND INDUSTRY, WHAT CHANGES?

There's an additional learning process for those who transition from the academic environment to industry, where different working cultures apply.

In academic research, the focus is on the creation of knowledge and working towards complete understanding in our respective domains. We are expected to be the expert in our specific area, to demonstrate our intelligence and the thoroughness in our method, and to prove our hypotheses with data – and before coming to any conclusions, we take the time to collect as much data and make as much in-depth analysis as we possibly can. The focus of our research output is on publications, and in STEM especially, on positive results.

In the private sector however, different dynamics lead to different behaviours. In industry, we need to complete the process in order to find the funding (by selling the product); unlike in academia, where the funding generally arrives before the research begins. Work in the private sector is organized predominantly in terms of projects, focused on achieving fast results, and demonstrating efficiency along the way. We work less as individual experts, rather as a team of experts, and we make the best decision we can with the limited data we have available.

These differences can sometimes make it hard to transition without feeling under pressure or even frustrated, especially when we are asked to work on short-term projects and can no longer explore a question as much as we would like.

You can help yourself to prepare for the shift in a number of ways:

- * Learn the principles and method of project management before you finish your doctorate or postdoc, and make sure to put them into practice, at work or in your private life
- * Practice giving yourself permission to be happy with “good enough” rather than “perfect”, and on building your confidence to be able to argue for what you believe is the right path to take – even if you don't have all the data to prove it
- * Reach out to your new manager and ask if they have a longer-term project you could take on, alongside the short-term ones

Having a family life with children in parallel with a career is a feasible but often difficult project for both women and men. However, the burden does not fall on women's shoulders in the same way as it can on men. It is women, in all professions, who are still most likely to have to reconcile work and private life. This means that they work double shifts (job and home), or even triple (with volunteering or civic engagements), or are employed on a part-time basis, with repercussions for their social insurance contributions. Men, on the other hand, who want to reconcile work and family life, may find it difficult to find part-time work. Moreover, switching to part-time employment may end up entailing a drop in salary, without a proportional reduction in the workload.

Investing in a new role, precarity and complexity of work can all have an impact on private life. The conditions can act as obstacles to have time to rest, carry out domestic tasks, or to take care of family members.

Equal opportunities offices and human resources services can provide information on maternity, parental and paternity leave, and rights linked to motherhood as well as infant care facilities.

Women's rights in the workplace are protected under Swiss law in four key areas:

1. Non-discrimination: at federal level, discrimination against a female worker on the grounds of her pregnancy, motherhood or family situation is prohibited. This rule applies throughout the contractual relationships, from recruitment to termination of employment, and affects all aspects of the working relationship, particularly the allocation of tasks, the flexibility of working conditions, remuneration, professional training and promotion.
2. Discrimination at the time of recruitment: during a recruitment process, the hiring party may not question a woman applicant regarding the possibility of her being pregnant. The applicant has the right to reply inaccurately, or even dishonestly, to an unlawful question.
3. Protection against dismissal: the employer may not terminate a woman's permanent employment contract either during pregnancy or during the sixteen-week period following childbirth.
4. Time reserved for breast-feeding: mothers must be given the necessary time to breast-feed their children. During the child's first year, breast-feeding counts as working time.

CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT: MENTORSHIP



ACIDUL is the association for early career researchers at the University of Lausanne. They can advise on questions of your rights at work.
wp.unil.ch/acidul/apropos

The **UNIL Equality Office** provides advice and support for the reconciliation of work, family and studies, for childcare, and for carers (those who care of sick, disabled or elderly people)
unil.ch/egalite > Equality at the University of Lausanne > Gender equality

The **UNIL Human Resources Service** provides advice on your employment rights and opportunities.
unil.ch/srh

The **UNIL Welcome Center** supports dual career expatriate couples
unil.ch/welcomecentre > Arriving accompanied

The **Federal Office for Gender Equality** has information on legal frameworks and equal pay
ebg.admin.ch/ebg/en/

ch.ch is a service provided by the federal, cantonal and communal administration giving advice on multiple aspects of living and working in Switzerland, including on issues of family and work.
ch.ch > Work > Family and work



SOME MENTORING PROGRAMMES:

The **Faculty of Biology and Medicine at UNIL** has an academic mentoring programme for people affiliated with the FBM, from the doctorate level onwards.
unil.ch/fbm/ > Carrière > Mentorat académique

The **Réseau romand de mentoring pour femmes** is for women researchers at the end of the doctorate or during the postdoc, with a goal of supporting a career in academic research through mentoring.

unifr.ch/f-mentoring
Professional associations sometimes offer mentoring programmes. Check the websites for the associations in your domain of interest.

Mentoring is an exchange relationship in which one person (the mentor) supports the professional development of another, less experienced person (the mentee). This relationship is a privileged place of learning and exchange of experience.

Mentoring can also be done collectively, when a group of peers come together to address a common issue. In formal mentoring programmes, mentors and mentees come from different domains or institutions. This helps prevent the exchange from becoming influenced by the same issues that may exist in the relationship with a superior, while also being complementary to existing supports.

WHERE TO FIND SUPPORT?

- * The Graduate Campus
- * What to do in situations of mobbing or harassment?
- * Unemployment and the BNF programme
- * Diversity, inclusion and LGBTIQ+

THE GRADUATE CAMPUS



The mission of the Graduate Campus is to inform and support each doctoral and post-doctoral researcher, to help them achieve their personal goals at UNIL, all in anticipation of a successful career. Personal, professional and scientific profiles are at this stage already specialised and specific enough to require personalised advice, while taking advantage of the transversal aspects and the stages and questions that each person goes through.

The parallel statuses of researcher, teacher, student and employee, and the many different services available, can make administrative processes complex. The Graduate Campus is also there to accompany and support you in these procedures.

While the disciplinary and scientific aspects of your time at UNIL are the responsibility of the UNIL faculties, the Graduate Campus, through its advice and training, concentrates on the transversal aspects, both in terms of career paths and training. Thanks to the participation of people from the seven UNIL faculties, the Graduate Campus is also part of the cross-fertilisation of ideas and practices between different scientific cultures.

Playing an integral role in the development of policy for early career researchers, both for the University and for society, the Graduate Campus monitors the career paths taken by doctorate holders. Whatever their career objectives, within academia or beyond, the skills acquired and developed through research and

university teaching enrich society with these curious, critical, passionate and enterprising minds. By preparing them for these multiple career options, the Graduate Campus helps everyone to aim for success.

We encourage you to contact us if you need help or support. If we are not able to answer you directly, we will put you in touch with the unit best suited to meet your needs.

unil.ch/graduatecampus

WHAT TO DO IN SITUATIONS OF MOBBING OR HARASSMENT?

Psychological harassment (mobbing) is characterised by various forms of hostile behaviour by one or more people. The aim is to give a colleague in a sense of inferiority or to destabilise them constantly or repeatedly over a period of several months.

Psychological harassment often develops from an unresolved conflict. This conflict may stem from a difference of opinion, rivalries, power struggles, etc. Consequently, it is important to act quickly when a conflict develops. The more time passes, the more the working climate deteriorates, and the more difficult it is to re-establish a trustful situation.

Sexual harassment in the workplace is a form of discrimination prohibited by the Equality Act (Leg, art.4). It is unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature or any other behaviour based on gender, which is unwanted by the person who is confronted with it and which violates their dignity. Sexual harassment can also be based on sexual orientation (real or perceived) or gender identity. Sexual harassment is not determined by the perpetrator's intent to harm, but by the fact that the behaviour is unwanted by the person subjected to it. Unlike mobbing, it is not necessary for the situation to be repeated for it to be called sexual harassment. Some examples include:

Sexist remarks or jokes on sexual characteristics, sexual behaviour or sexual orientation

- * Unwelcome invitations with sexual intent
- * Unwanted physical contact
- * Showing pornographic material
- * Sexual assault, sexual coercion, attempted rape or rape





Foreign women are particularly vulnerable to sexual harassment. Isolated, in a culture sometimes very different from one they are used to, they do not know if what they are experiencing is problematic or if they are misinterpreting it.

If you feel that you are being mobbed, sexually harassed or in a situation of conflict that cannot be resolved, it is important that you keep a detailed and precise note of all incidents and bullying: perpetrator, date, time, place, facts, words, and witnesses if there are any. It is advisable to try to express clearly and non-aggressively how you feel to the person whose actions you feel to be hostile. If possible, try to say it in the presence of witnesses. Sometimes it is not possible to do this, and the person may not hear or may not want to hear.

If you experience psychological or sexual harassment or conflict in your workplace, contact human resources, a specialised service for this issue, a mediator or any other person of reference to find out about the possibilities for action and support.



SUPPORT AND RESOURCES AT UNIL
UNIL Help provides extensive information on what to do and who to contact for support in situations of conflict, mobbing and harassment.
unil.ch/help

Human Resources will advise anyone who feels they have been subject to mobbing or harassment and will direct them towards the relevant organisations. They are also able to answer questions linked to your contract or working conditions, depending on the faculty or service.
unil.ch/srh

ACIDUL is the association for mid-level staff and doctoral candidates at UNIL.
wp.unil.ch/acidul

Accueil Santé is the UNIL health centre, with the goal of supporting the maintenance of good physical and mental health. Appointments, spaces for exchange and workshops are available. unil.ch/accueilsante

Aumônerie is a place for discussion, listening and support during difficult times.
unil.ch/aum

Social Affairs and Student Mobility (SASME) can provide information on psychotherapeutic consultations for doctoral candidates.
unil.ch/sasme > Student Support > Psychotherapeutic consultations



SUPPORT AND RESOURCES IN SWITZERLAND
The Federal Office for Gender Equality (FOGE) provides information on sexual harassment in the workplace.
ebg.admin.ch

Guide social romand provides information (in French) on the legal frameworks and procedures for cases of sexual and psychological harassment, including street harassment, in the western Swiss cantons and at the federal level.
guidesocial.ch > Droit et justice > Violences > Harcèlement sexuel, harcèlement psychologique (mobbing) et harcèlement de rue

ch.ch is a service provided by the federal, cantonal and communal administration giving advice on multiple aspects of living and working in Switzerland, including on issues of bullying and sexual harassment.
ch.ch > Work > Problems at work

UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE BNF PROGRAMME

On average, most PhDs find a job in the year after the end of their degree, including positions with management responsibility. During the transition though, you may be unemployed for a short period of time, and which point you may have the option to register for unemployment benefits.

Unemployment benefits in Switzerland will depend on your residence status. Depending on your status and in order to benefit, you will need to show proof of salaried employment (i.e. having contributed to unemployment insurance, “assurance chômage”) for at least twelve months in the two years prior to your request.

Among the employment integration measures available is the BNF: a programme which encourages the integration of highly qualified people into the Swiss labour market. The programme offers networking and project work opportunities adapted to your qualification level, as well as coaching, individual counselling and further training (job search methods, project management, IT and others).



**The BNF national
qualification programme**
bnf.unibe.ch

ch.ch is a service provided by the Swiss authorities and gives advice on multiple aspects of living and working in Switzerland, including on rights to unemployment benefit.
ch.ch > [Work](#) > [Unemployment](#)

DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND LGBTIQ+

According to Article 8 of the Federal Constitution, every person living in Switzerland has the right to equal treatment. This means that they may not be discriminated against on the basis of their origin, race, gender, language, religion or way of life. Several forms of support are available to early career researchers.



**ASSOCIATIONS AND SUPPORT
SERVICES AGAINST RACISM AT UNIL**

Associations for UNIL students
and researchers
unil.ch/associations/asso

The UNIL Equality Office provides advice and resources against racial discrimination, including a list of associations and offices within and beyond UNIL.
unil.ch/egalite > [Non-discrimination](#) > [Against racial discrimination](#)

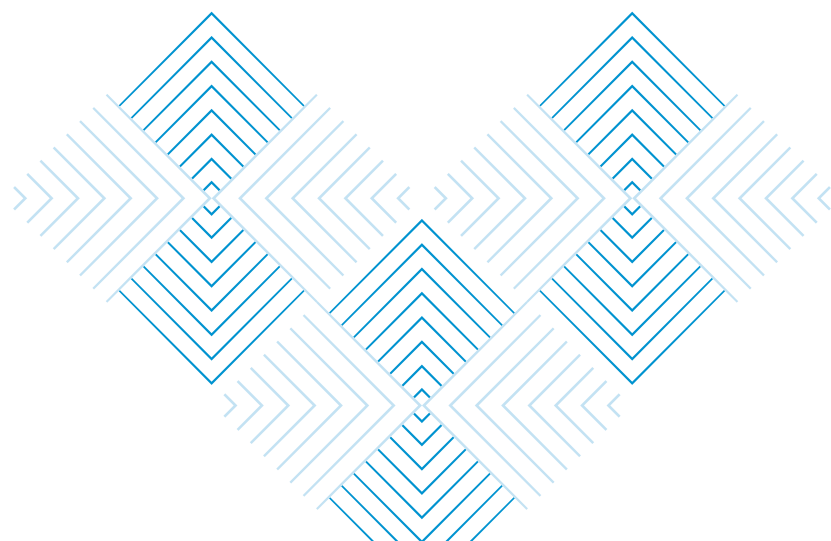
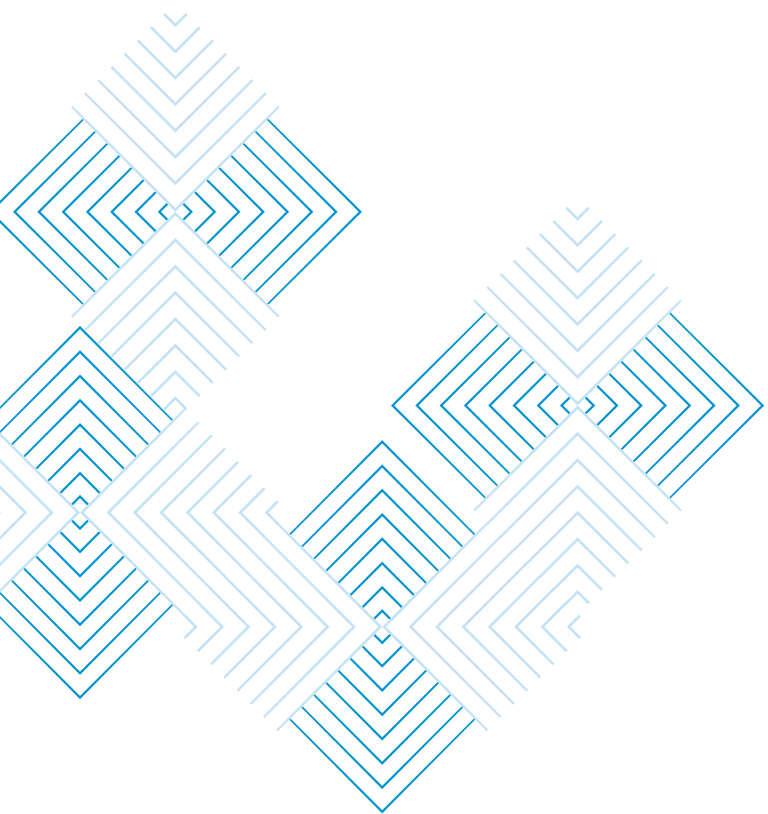


**ASSOCIATIONS AND SUPPORT
SERVICES FOR THE LGBTIQ+
COMMUNITY**

Associations for UNIL students
and researchers.
www.unil.ch/associations/asso

The UNIL Equality Office provides advice and resources on sexual orientation and gender identity, including a list of support associations.
unil.ch/egalite > [LGBTIQ+](#)

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unil.ch/sasme > [Student Support](#) > [Psychotherapeutic consultations](#)



unil.ch/graduatecampus
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