Questions and answers

Webinar 0 “Where am I now?” – personal career diagnosis before looking for work in Switzerland

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The answers are based on the expert’s presentation, the discussion during the webinar and the questions participants asked live in the chat. The full webinar recording is available on the JobBridge Switzerland portal.

About the JobBridge Switzerland programme

1. What is JobBridge Switzerland and who is it for?

It is a free job-search support programme implemented by USB – United for Support and Belonging with financial support from the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM). It is designed for Ukrainians with S status in Switzerland; if you are still waiting for a decision on your status, you are welcome to join too. The programme is open to participants from all cantons and is held mainly in Ukrainian.

2. How many webinars are there and what are the topics?

14 webinars in total. Core topics: labour law and working with S status, cantonal systems, working with the RAV, CVs and cover letters, job search, diploma recognition, workplace culture, further education.

Thematic webinars cover five career paths: IT and digital technologies; healthcare and care; hospitality and services; technical professions; entrepreneurship.

3. Do I have to attend all the webinars?

No. Complete the self-diagnosis on the portal – it will automatically suggest which webinars are most useful for you. But we are happy to see you at every one of them.

4. Where can I find the webinar recording? • *question from the chat*

After post-production, the recording will be published on YouTube and on the JobBridge Switzerland portal. We also share it through our channels: the Telegram chat “Robota CH”, LinkedIn and Instagram. The presentation, exercises and key takeaways will be available there too.

5. Can I ask questions after the webinar?

Yes. Leave your questions under the video – even if they concern another employment-related topic. We will go through them and make sure to address them in one of the upcoming webinars. A feedback form is also available; your personal data is not shared.

6. I am a professional and would like to speak as an expert at one of the webinars. How can I contact the team? • *question from the chat*

Write to us via the contacts on the JobBridge Switzerland portal. For example, the topic of career re-entry for medical professionals from Ukraine will be covered in the thematic webinar on healthcare and care.

Self-diagnosis and preparation

7. Why do the self-diagnosis if I already want to look for work?

The diagnosis helps you understand which stage of the integration process you are at and whether the other areas of your life are ready for a job search. Work brings satisfaction only when family, children, health and household are in balance. It is not an assessment: there are no right or wrong answers, and you are answering first and foremost for yourself.

8. Where do I start analysing my situation?

Divide your life into areas – family, children and childcare, health, household, social circle, learning, professional future. For each one, complete in writing the sentence “Right now, the thing in my life that needs the most attention is…”, then answer: what do I want to change, what resources do I already have for it, and how exactly will I do it?

9. Why is it so important to write things down rather than just think about them?

Thoughts in your head are quickly forgotten. What is written down or drawn sticks better, builds confidence and lets you return to your notes later and analyse them.

10. How do I avoid getting lost among many tasks?

Use a Kanban board: divide your tasks into three columns – “planned”, “in progress”, “done” – and move them along as you make progress. When there are many completed tasks, praise yourself: this gives your motivation a real boost.

11. When should I organise childcare – before or after the job search?

Before. The principle “first I’ll find a job, then I’ll organise childcare” does not work in practice. Childcare (Kinderbetreuung) needs to be sorted out before you start looking.

Resources and daily routine

12. How can I tell that my resources are running low?

The first sign is inner tension at the thought that you have to do something. If the tension turns into stress, that is the signal to stop. Remember: every resource is limited, so it is important to know what exactly you are spending it on.

13. What is the traffic-light principle?

It is a simple way to assess any area of your life. Green – resources are available. Yellow – resources are limited, for example, you wake up at night or take a long time to fall asleep. Red – support is needed, for example, you cannot sleep at all; in this case it is worth seeking help, including from professionals.

14. Why Maslow’s pyramid?

It shows that basic needs – physiological ones (sleep, food, rest) and the need for safety – must be met first. Until they are, there is no point talking about readiness for work.

15. How do I organise my day so I don't burn out during the job search?

Use the 1–1–1 rule: every day, one "lesson" for yourself (rest and recovery), one for integration and language, and one for your professional future. For example, an hour reading job descriptions instead of scrolling social media is already a step forward.

16. I feel completely alone here. Where can I find support?

Draw a map of your support network: personal contacts (family, partner, friends, acquaintances), professional contacts (colleagues from previous jobs, new acquaintances from seminars, local professionals in your field), practical support (social workers) and learning. Under each group, write down names and the questions you could bring to them. Separately, think about who gives you energy and who drains it.

17. My partner does not want to work and thinks social assistance pays better. What can I do?

This happens quite often. The expert recommends turning to a therapist or coach. In Switzerland, people feel good (German "wohl") when they support themselves, and the social system here is much less generous than it may seem.

18. How do you describe in German the feeling of supporting yourself? • *question from the chat*

The word "wohl": "Ich fühle mich bei der Arbeit wohl" – "I feel good and fulfilled at work".

Skills and career direction

19. I don't know what kind of work I want. Where do I start?

Try the association test based on Jung. Write the word "work" and find 16 associations for it (each up to two words). Then combine them in pairs with new associations: 16 → 8 → 4 → 2 → 1. The final association shows what work means to you on a subconscious level. The results are often surprising.

20. How do I identify my strengths?

Answer in writing: what have I done and what did I do best; which fields interest me; what are my hobbies; what can I do outside work and household tasks; what are my favourite skills; what am I proud of; what do others value in me. Skills that come up several times in your answers are your competitive advantage on the labour market.

21. Which strengths do candidates most often overlook in themselves?

People generally underestimate how much they can do. The simplest approach is to ask those close to you what they value in you. Pay attention to skills that can be transferred to a new profession (transferable skills): for example, someone who has created a beautiful garden, even on a balcony, may find their place as a florist.

22. Should I turn my hobby into a job?

It is an individual decision. If your hobby restores your energy, working at it may take that energy away. The expert, for example, sews but has consciously decided not to earn money from it.

23. How do I “translate” my experience into the employer’s language?

Rephrase what you have done as competencies: “organised the team’s work” means coordination, organisation, planning; “explained complex matters to clients” means strong communication skills. With a list of competencies, you can ask an AI tool to suggest professions that match them.

24. Why search for vacancies not only by job title?

Job titles in Switzerland are often unexpected, so searching by title alone does not guarantee you will find your place. Search by skills as well. Remember: your competencies may allow you to work successfully in a different position from the one you held in Ukraine.

25. What if I lack experience in the field I want?

Switzerland has a well-developed system for this – and not only for young people: work placements within integration programmes, internships, volunteering, freelancing and one-off jobs. If you do have experience, it needs to be “packaged” well and offered to the employer.

Conditions, limitations and diplomas

26. Which limitations should I consider before applying?

Above all: working hours, location, qualifications (diploma recognition), language, taxes and family circumstances. Rate each factor using the traffic-light principle and decide whether you have the resources to overcome it. Limitations not considered in advance often lead to people terminating their contract themselves during the probation period.

27. Should I accept night shifts?

If you have no experience of night work, the expert advises against it at a mature age: several of her clients did not get through even the probation period because of the night schedule. When you are young, you can try it to gain that experience.

28. How important is the distance to work?

Very important, especially for single parents. If something happens at school, you need to be able to get there in time. Calculate the real travel time to work and to school.

29. Does the canton affect my choice of job?

Yes. Pay attention to the canton where the employer is registered and to the withholding tax (Quellensteuer) at your place of residence. If this is a significant limitation, consider looking in another region or moving.

30. How do I find out whether my diploma needs to be recognised?

Switzerland has regulated and non-regulated professions. Find out via government platforms whether your profession is regulated and which organisation to submit your diploma to for recognition; AI tools can also help a lot with this. A separate JobBridge webinar will be devoted entirely to diploma recognition.

31. Is my Ukrainian diploma decisive?

No. As Adrian Gerber (SEM) emphasised, what will work for you above all is flexibility, the willingness to keep learning and contact with people. There is no way around learning in a new country – it is worth accepting this as normal.

Language

32. Can I find work without the language?

In the early stages, Ukrainians were sometimes hired with English only, and for simple jobs even without any local language. Now employers increasingly expect knowledge of the local language. Without the language, even a highly qualified professional is like a rich person whose accounts are frozen: the experience is there, but it cannot be used.

33. What language level do I need – B2, C1?

The levels are a rough guide. There are people at A2 level who communicate very well, and people with a higher-level certificate who cannot speak. It is more important to work out which language skills your job actually needs: spoken or written, listening comprehension, professional vocabulary (berufliche Sprache).

34. How can I judge for myself whether my language is good enough?

Ask yourself: do I understand work instructions? Can I explain a task to someone? Can I explain why I did something the way I did? The answers depend on the field and the job you want.

Job search and applications

35. How do I organise the search itself?

Treat the search as a job: it involves many mechanical, repetitive tasks, so you need your own system. Decide on relevant platforms, ways of submitting applications and how you will use your energy.

36. Do connections work in Switzerland?

Yes, “vitamin B” (Beziehungen) works very well. Do not avoid new contacts. At the same time, remember that a recommendation also places responsibility on the person who gives it.

37. Where can I get professional advice?

Find out which institutions and organisations in your canton provide this kind of support. Some coaching companies work on referral from the authorities supporting you, including online for other cantons.

38. I have already sent 40 applications with no result and have lost my motivation. What should I change: my CV, the vacancies, my language or my career direction? • *question from the chat*

It all depends on the field. In IT, 40 applications are not yet meaningful; it is worth reflecting when the count reaches thousands. In retail, 200–500 applications may be the signal to analyse.

Start the analysis with your documents: your CV should immediately show why you are worth inviting to an interview. If the positions differ significantly, tailor your documents to each one. Also check your qualifications: do your tasks in Ukraine match what is required here?

39. An employer doubts that my education meets Swiss requirements. What can I do?

This happens: the expert told how an employer questioned her about a cook with vocational-college training almost item by item through the curriculum. Direct contact with the employer and a chance to demonstrate your skills in practice, for example during a trial day, can help.

40. How do I set a goal properly?

Turn a wish into a goal: not “I want to work”, but “what kind of work exactly do I want?”. Formulate it using the SMART method – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound. Then identify your priority, your available resources and the first three steps.

Do you have other questions? Leave them under the video on the JobBridge Switzerland portal (jobbridge.usb.ngo) – we will answer them in upcoming webinars.