



Securing an apprenticeship – a parents' guide



Kanton
Obwalden

Bildungs- und Kulturdepartement BKD
Berufs- und Weiterbildungsberatung BWB

Cooperation

Choosing a career or “vocational orientation” is at the core of cooperative orientation school (Orientierungsschule).

The **teachers** support the pupils’ process of learning and maturing into adults. They use Switzerland’s “Lehrplan 21” curriculum and career choice timetable as frameworks and go through a variety of documents in the course of teaching career choice.

The **young people** develop skill sets to allow them to make their own decision independently. Your assistance and support is important in this process.

Additional documents at
berufsberatung-ow.ch

You **as parents and guardians** play an active role in finding a career. You and your son or daughter jointly take on the main responsibility for the process of choosing a career. Tell them about your own experiences and give them stimuli and suggestions. Encourage your son or daughter when the career choice process hits a snag or they encounter rejection.

Vocational trainers also play an important role. They provide young people with relevant information and contact options for finding out about careers and apprenticeships, as well as guaranteeing the range of apprenticeships.

The **specialists from the Career and Training Advice Centre** provide young people and parents with information and advice in choosing careers and schools – in other words in planning out a career path. One-to-one career advice can be sought for various different reasons and in a variety of situations. It is an optional service.

Berufs- und Weiterbildungsberatung BWB

Brünigstrasse 178

6060 Sarnen

Telephone: +41 41 666 63 44

berufsberatung@ow.ch

Career choice timetable

The career choice timetable stipulates a variety of activities over seven stages.

These stages are divided up into optimal time windows from the perspective of many young people's development. Each young person will go through the process of choosing a career and apprenticeship in their own unique way, as there is no set formula. Stages one to three are just as important as the actual trial apprenticeships, as they prepare young people for these trial apprenticeships and create first impressions.

→ You can find the career choice timetable in the middle of this brochure.

Self-discovery

Allow your son or daughter sufficient time for this process. Even somewhat unrealistic expectations have their place during the initial phase. Discuss perceptions, strengths and interests together with them.

Getting to know the world of work and careers

Accompany your son or daughter to events hosted by companies, associations or other partner organisations. These provide initial insights into the world of work, including experiencing its sights, sounds and smells. Real experiences are crucial. They are not a replacement for trial apprenticeships, but they do help to prepare for them.

Doing a trial apprenticeship

At cooperative orientation school, trial apprenticeships are prepared for and carried out in accordance with the "Regulations for trial apprenticeships". These regulations apply to trial apprenticeships that may be undertaken during the tuition period. Five school days during year 8 are earmarked for this. The regulations can be found on the website www.berufsberatung-ow.ch.

Gauging and deciding in comparison with the professional world

The career choice pass is a compulsory part of the career choice documentation. It documents the many large and small steps taken by your son or daughter during the career choice process, demonstrating their engagement. The pupils can prepare for trial apprenticeships by entering strengths and important activities. The purpose is always to compare strengths and interests/activities with the current careers and match them against each other as well as possible. Vocational trainers can retrace which careers the young person has been informed about and the progress they are making with the career choice process. Pupils insert comments and make notes of their impressions and experiences, especially during the trial apprenticeships. The career choice pass is constantly updated during the career choice process, with the date showing current version. The signatures reflect the fact that the career choice process is also a family project.

Arriving at a decision

Making a confident choice of career requires meaningful engagement both with oneself and with a variety of professions. For many young people, trial apprenticeships taking place during the summer holidays leading up to year 9 are also important. For this reason, you should not commit to an apprenticeship position too early. Concluding contracts too hastily can cause even capable young people to drop out of their apprenticeships.

- Discuss feedback from vocational trainers and other people in charge with your son or daughter. Depending on the feedback, you might want to explore other careers.
- Give your daughter/son enough time and support the process of engaging meaningfully with the various careers.
- The profession or course should play to your son's/daughter's interests and strengths.
- Don't push them to commit too soon. They should have finished making their career choice and you should support them in their decision. At this age, your son or daughter is undergoing an intensive phase of development which should not be cut short.
- Ask the people in charge at the company providing the apprenticeship to view your son or daughter's year 9 school report. This will motivate them to perform well academically in year 9 and stand them in the best possible stead for the education that is to follow.

Aptitude tests

Assessment 8 is way to evaluate pupils' academic performance independently of marks and levels. They carry out tasks that are designed to correspond to their level of performance at the time. The assessment test is compulsory at half of all cooperative orientation schools and is held in the spring. At baccalaureate schools, the assessment test is optional. The pupils receive their results in the form of a profile. This can be compared against desired careers (www.jobskillsplus.ch).

It also forms the basis for planning individual learning in year 9 and can be attached to the application documents. All pupils are tested in mathematics and German. Level A apprentices are also tested in French and English, while this is optional for level B apprentices. The topics of nature and technology, the power of imagination, and technical and logical comprehension can all be chosen as options.



Vocational and academic educational paths

Choosing a career also means choosing a school. After finishing compulsory schooling, your son or daughter can choose between academic or vocational education. Consider and discuss the options and ask the teacher which route is the most appropriate.

Academic training with in-depth general education:

- Your son/daughter likes going to school and learning.
- Your son/daughter is good at grasping concepts.
- Your son/daughter likes the school setting and being part of a class.

Practical training with general education and vocational subjects:

- Your son/daughter would like to engage with vocational subjects alongside general education.
- Your son/daughter likes working with people of a variety of ages.
- Your son/daughter likes variation between days at school and days at work at the company providing the apprenticeship.

→ Academic education requires higher academic performance. Admission exams are sometimes required or academic admission criteria may have to be met. The majority of schools offer trial days and information events so that your son or daughter can get a variety of different impressions. A decision for or against academic education should only be made once a variety of careers have been sampled. This way, it will be possible to weigh up and decide what your son/daughter liked the most and what really suits them.

→ You can find information about academic education paths at the Education Information Centre (BIZ), at www.berufsberatung-ow.ch or in a consultation with a careers advisor. It's important to have a plan for how to proceed.



Decision-making styles

The way your son/daughter makes decisions in a given situation is probably the way they will decide on their career, too. Decisions often contain elements of all four of the following categories.

- Planners can usually justify decisions straight away and prepare for them step by step. They are able to distinguish between what is and isn't important and look for alternatives. They need a lot of time.
- Experimenters make decisions spontaneously, are risk-takers and are brave enough to try new things. They are stubborn when under pressure. They are of the view that decisions need to be good, but not perfect.
- Doers tend to make quick decisions based on gut feeling. They require a clear situation and are thrown off by unanticipated events. They justify their decisions retroactively. They like to be able to stand by the decision in the long term.
- Seekers like to mull decisions over and need a lot of time. They struggle to make clear decisions and go by intuition and feelings. They react strongly to external influences and require a lot of information.

Addresses

www.berufsberatung-ow.ch

Berufs- und Weiterbildungsberatung Obwalden
Bildungs-Informations-Zentrum BIZ

Various documents about choosing careers and schools (trial apprenticeships, looking for apprenticeships, BIZ app, etc.) and other topics

www.berufsberatung.ch

Swiss Service Centre for Vocational Education and Training (Schweizerisches Dienstleistungszentrum, SDBB)

Information about all apprenticeships and training courses, films, vacancies for apprenticeships, etc.

www.lernpassplus.ch /
www.jobskillsplus.ch

Compare the assessment test with career profiles

www.anforderungsprofile.ch

Requirement profiles for various professions

www.ksobwalden.ch

Academic baccalaureate at Kantonsschule Obwalden

www.stiftsschule-engelberg.ch

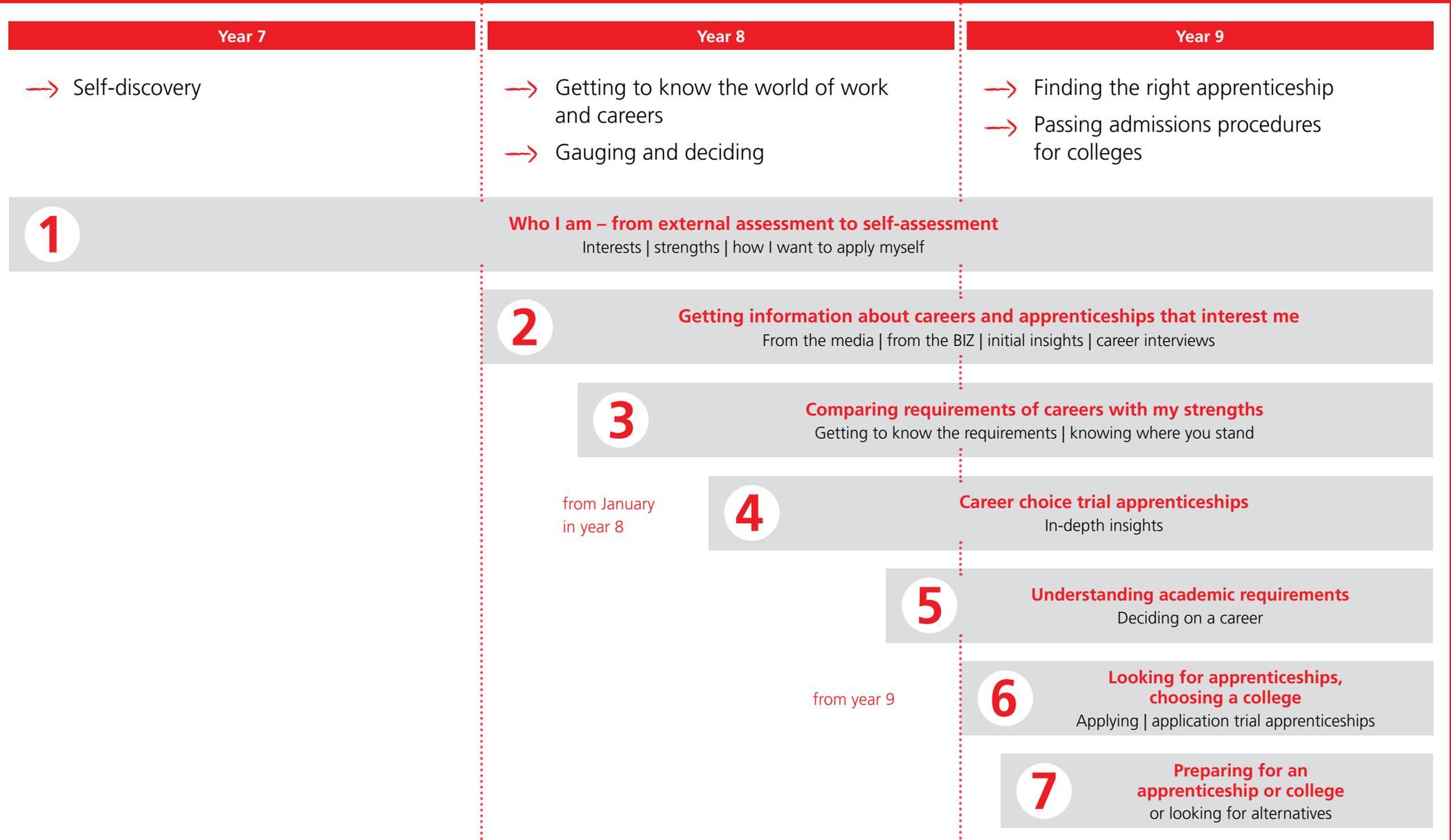
Academic baccalaureate at Stiftsschule Engelberg (for pupils from Engelberg)

www.fmz.lu.ch

Colleges in Lucerne, with some offering Federal VET diplomas and some vocational baccalaureates



The career choice timetable





Your first apprenticeship – a young person's guide



Kanton
Obwalden

Bildungs- und Kulturdepartement BKD
Berufs- und Weiterbildungsberatung BWB

Berufs- und Weiterbildungsberatung BWB

Brünigstrasse 178

6060 Sarnen

Telephone: +41 41 666 63 44

berufsberatung@ow.ch

Additional documents at
berufsberatung-ow.ch

The various stages leading up to your first apprenticeship

You will go through the process of choosing a career from the first to the third year of cooperative orientation school. You will encounter various professions and apprenticeships and plan your first apprenticeship. Along the way, you will make a few decisions and compare your strengths and interests with the activities involved in over 200 vocational apprenticeships.

A variety of events, such as the BIT careers information days and the ZEBI Central Swiss education fair are on the cards, both during the tuition as part of the vocational orientation and during your free time.

Various people, companies and specialist organisations will support you throughout this process: your parents or carers, colleagues, teachers, vocational trainers, officials from professional associations, career advisors and more. In the course of the tuition, you will work with a few documents and will record your most important findings and realisations in the career choice pass. This compulsory tool provides an overview of the steps you have taken, allowing you to show others precisely what and how much you have done.



Trial apprenticeship

👉 Career choice trial apprenticeship

In career choice trial apprenticeships, you will sample professions you are interested in, try out various activities and meet people who work within the fields. The career choice trial apprenticeship takes place before making a definitive choice of career. Although you will come into contact with companies that provide apprenticeships, the career choice trial apprenticeship is not a substitute for finding an apprenticeship place.

A career choice trial apprenticeship lasts (depending on the profession and company) 1 to 3 days, or in rare cases 5 days. From January in year 8 onwards, you will have the opportunity to complete trial apprenticeships over the course of 5 teaching days (see "Regulations for trial apprenticeships" at www.berufsberatung-ow.ch). Your class teacher will inform you how your school will go about this. You should also plan in trial apprenticeships for the Fasnacht and Easter holidays during year 8 as well as the following summer holiday.

Preparation

You can find the addresses of companies that offer apprenticeships on the BIZ app and at the Education Information Centre (BIZ). You are also encouraged to make use of personal contacts (parents, godparents, aunts and uncles, acquaintances, teachers) to find an apprenticeship position.

Phone companies up, ask how they handle trial apprenticeships and which documents are important. Prepare and note down key points and questions.

If you go there in person, take your career choice pass with you. It should be up-to-date.

Clarify when and to whom you will need to report on the first day of your trial apprenticeship, what your working hours will be and whether you will need to bring your own work clothes with you.

Plan out how to arrive at the company on time.

Follow-up

After completing each trial apprenticeship, it is helpful to evaluate it at home and at school. Talk about your experiences and impressions. Your diary and the assessment performed by the trial apprenticeship supervisor are very useful when doing this.

During the trial apprenticeship

Hand over the "Assessment by trial apprenticeship supervisor" sheet right at the start. At the end of the trial apprenticeship, ask for an assessment conversation. In this conversation, find out what their impressions of you were and describe your own experiences.

Enquire as to whether there would be a chance for you to get an apprenticeship at this company and, if interested, when/how to proceed.

Keep a diary. There is a template for this at the Education Information Centre or on www.berufsberatung-ow.ch.

Ask the people who work there and the apprentices questions. They will be happy to help. It will also show them that you're interested.

You can rank the basic careers in a hierarchy. Information from the trial apprenticeships and conversations with family, friends, teachers and specialists from the Career and Training Advice Centre can all help in this process.



The application file

Your application will make your first impressions on the potential apprenticeship provider. It is your chance to sell yourself. The application file contains various documents and there are a few important points to note. Write a new cover letter for each application and adapt it to the position being advertised for. Your cover letter should be unique and lay the groundwork for your interview.

Take the following points into account:

- What is it?
- Who are you?
- Why are you applying to this position at this company?

Putting effort into designing a neat and tidy file pays off. It's also possible for this design to be personal to you. An incomplete file may cause you to be rejected.

The application file can be sent by post or e-mail. The same applies to the documents, which should be completed with just as much care.

Information about the application file and how to proceed will be provided during your lessons. Or you can find it at the BIZ or www.berufsberatung-ow.ch.



Finding an apprenticeship

Have you engaged seriously with the career choice process? Consciously choosing a career is a long process. Part of it involves actively confronting yourself, your own future, and various professions and apprenticeships. The career choice pass demonstrates this. If you want to make a serious decision about your career, you will need time and a considered approach. Only then will you be able to look for a suitable apprenticeship.

The apprenticeships on offer at companies in Obwalden as well as those in other cantons will be published in the summer holidays before the start of year 9. You can find these at www.berufsberatung.ch/lehrstellen and also on the BIZ app. Some companies and associations also announce their apprenticeships directly on their homepage or in advertisements, or you may hear about them during a trial apprenticeship. If you send off your application file late during year 9, you should phone the company up first and ask whether the apprenticeship is still open for applications.

The application trial apprenticeship

After applying for an apprenticeship, if a company thinks you seem like the right fit, you will be offered an application trial apprenticeship. The company providing the apprenticeship will then check how well suited you are to the profession and team/company. This is a central element of how apprentices are chosen.

Comparing career profiles/aptitude tests

When sending your application file, you will also send your assessment results. At www.jobskillsplus.ch, you can find a profile of your desired career. Compare this profile with your results. Do they match? If the company asks you to take an additional aptitude test, you should apply for this test. There are evaluations that will be performed at the company as well as standardised tests for a variety of professions. The most widespread tests are Multicheck (www.multicheck.ch) and Basic-Check (www.basic-check.ch). For more information on how to compare your strengths, see the requirement profiles (www.anforderungsprofile.ch).

👉 Invitation to an interview

If you've been invited to an interview, then you've overcome an important hurdle. Before attending, think about the following questions: Why did you decide on this profession? Why this company? What are your strengths and talents? Why are you specifically the right person for the apprenticeship? You can also find clues on how to answer these questions on the company's homepage.

👉 Increasing your chances of success – tips in case of rejection

You're still looking for an apprenticeship.
What can you do to improve your prospects?

- Ask the company providing the apprenticeship. This way, you can get clues about what to improve on next time you apply and whether you will be deemed suitable for that profession.
- Ask teachers, your parents or other "experts" to read through your application documents.
- Are you really convinced that you want to learn this profession? Are you well informed about the apprenticeship and have you managed to convince your vocational trainer?
- Different abilities play roles in different professions: your academic performance (school reports), manual dexterity, personal qualities and social skills. Do your abilities match the requirements of the desired profession?

If there's a lot that matches, then keep trying. Otherwise, explore other careers and apply for apprenticeships in these. Apply for one-to-one careers advice and review your choice.



Are you thinking of taking a gap year?

You can find a list of opportunities at www.berufsberatung-ow.ch.

👉 School or apprenticeship – which type of education is right for you?

Choosing a career also means choosing a school. After finishing compulsory schooling, more academically minded young people can choose between academic or vocational education and, for example, obtain a vocational baccalaureate alongside the apprenticeship or complete a college course. Bear this in mind and discuss which is the best path for you with your parents. You can find additional hints in the latter part of this brochure (parents' guide).

Careers advice

The specialists at the Career and Training Advice Centre will support you in choosing a career or school. You can address individual concerns and, if necessary, take tests. Your engagement and active cooperation are important. Careers advice is an optional service. It is helpful if your parents accompany you to the advisory consultations.

From year 8 onwards, you can arrange an advisory appointment if, for example, you are:

- unclear about your career interests and abilities.
- only finding a small number of apprenticeships in your chosen profession and are struggling for ideas.
- unsure whether taking a gap year makes sense.
- feeling torn and need support in making a decision.
- unable to decide between an apprenticeship and a college course.
- unsure whether you can persevere to the baccalaureate level.

Education Information Centre (BIZ)

The BIZ is open three times a week and no registration is required. A specialist will provide support about the information you're looking for. You can find information about:

- basic vocational training
- vocational baccalaureates
- colleges
- bridging programmes/gap years
- apprenticeships and training courses

You can search for basic vocational training, also known as apprenticeships, based on personal interests. There are various documents available about this topic.

 **The BIZ app has a variety of functions related to looking for apprenticeships and companies that provide them.**

There are **vacancies for apprenticeships** on offer and not just in Obwalden – you can search all German-speaking cantons. Using the **directory of companies that provide apprenticeships**, you can find host companies to undertake trial apprenticeships.

Desired careers can also be selected by category or interest. All apprenticeships are also listed alphabetically or according to line of work.