



**University of  
Zurich<sup>UZH</sup>**

**English Department**

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# **Career Brochure**

**Alumni Portraits**



**Fachverein Anglistik (FAVA)**



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## Foreword

### Dear students of the English Department,

Whether you've just started studying English or will be graduating soon, we are sure you have at one point or another been asked the dreaded question: **“So what do you want to do after your studies?”** Many students plan on becoming English teachers – but while this is a popular career choice, it is not for everyone. An English degree offers a wide range of career options after graduation. However, it is often difficult to imagine what these fields might look like.

It is for this reason that the FAVA has decided to put together a brochure featuring **interviews with nine ES alumni who followed career paths that did not involve teaching.** In these interviews, we asked alumni about their careers and have also collected some tips that they had for current students. Today, the selected participants work in a wide range of professional fields, but the one thing that they could all agree on was that their career paths tended to be winding roads rather than straight lines.

We hope that these portraits will inspire you to consider less obvious careers that you may not even have known were an option for English graduates. Keep in mind that these nine different career paths are only the tip of the iceberg – i.e. the number of fields that English students can pursue post-graduation are legion, and this brochure aims to highlight this very diversity.

We hope that you feel inspired by the following nine interviews, and also that we can put you a little more at ease concerning your professional future. From what we've been told in these interviews, life after graduation certainly isn't as scary as it may seem right now!

XX FAVA

[Fachverein Anglistik](#)



## Alumni Portraits

### 1 Reputational Risk Officer

**Name:** Sarah Henauer-Jäggi

**Employer:** Credit Suisse

**Bachelor Major:** English Literature and Linguistics

**Bachelor Minor:** Educational Science & Film Studies



#### **What was your path after the end of your studies, and how did you get your current job?**

I graduated in 2014 and stayed at the executive search company I had already been working at during my studies. Although I was offered a permanent position there, I decided not to continue working at the company, as I wanted to pursue a position at a bigger, more corporate company. The outlook of travelling enticed me. Therefore, I applied for a trainee program at Credit Suisse, which a friend of mine had already completed. She was still at the bank and happy with her position. The program was in business risk management, and they were very open when it came to qualifications; any kind of university degree was sufficient. It consisted of working 100% and completing a banking education next to that. As part of the program, there was the opportunity for me to go on a 6-month trial in the reputational risk area. I ended up staying and have been working there for 6 years while consistently being able to develop myself professionally. I am very happy with the job.

#### **Did you work part-time during your studies? If so, to what extent was this helpful in getting a job after the end of your studies?**

In my gap year, I worked full-time at the Apple store. I continued working there 30% during the semester and 100% during the semester break for 4 years in total (I think we didn't have to write our papers in the break back then). The job taught me to manage stressful situations and juggle the expectations of different people, because the store was almost run over by people on holidays or whenever a new product launched. During the last year of my studies, I worked – like I mentioned before – at the executive search company. It involved

mostly admin work such as composing portraits of the candidates and scheduling appointments. There, I learnt to work very precisely, as the company was a “one-man-show” and had the name of the owner; meaning he accepted no mistakes. Also, I learnt how to behave around people in high level positions – people skills which are always of advantage.

### **To what extent are your studies useful in your daily work?**

At first, I expected that they wouldn't necessarily help me in the line of work I wanted to pursue, but there was one central thing that stuck with me: Text analysis. It is essential for me to be able to scan long texts quickly and grasp the most important information from them. In my job, I have to read a lot of cases which are often risk assessments of clients and their transactions. Besides analyzing them, I have to be able summarize these cases cohesively – another skill learnt at the ES – to report them to senior management. And, of course, English in itself is highly useful to me, as it is our corporate language.

### **Is there anything else you'd like to add?**

Contrary to popular belief, you don't need an MA to find a job. The Bachelor in English already gives you good communication skills, the ability to work independently and do your own research. Have an open mind and try to see how far you can go. I achieved a fair amount with it and am more than content with that. Also, try to apply to companies rather than to positions. In my case, I knew that I wanted to work in a big company, so I researched trainee programs in such companies, as I knew I would need training to enter. There are so many positions out there that you can't even imagine exist – go ahead and explore!

*Credit Suisse regularly offers internships (for more information, see <https://join.com/companies/ecofact>). If you have any further questions for Sarah you can ask for her contact information at [englishstudies@es.uzh.ch](mailto:englishstudies@es.uzh.ch)!*

## 2 Digital Campaigner

**Name:** Fabian Weingartner

**Employer:** Verein Klimaschutz Schweiz

**Bachelor Major:** English Linguistics and Literature

**Bachelor Minor:** Modern History

**Master Major:** English Literature and Linguistics

**Master Minor:** Gender Studies & Contemporary History



**What was your path after the end of your studies, and how did you get your current job?**

After graduating in 2019, I applied at the department for equality in Basel. I didn't get the job, so I continued working as an assistant job manager in the coffee shop I had already been working at during my studies for half a year. At the start of 2020, I got accepted for an internship at the department for equality at the city of Berne. The internship was limited to a year's time and afterwards I had no opportunity to continue working there, as the jobs are very sought after and they prefer people with more experience. Fortunately, I got the opportunity to do an ad interim project (an awareness month for LGBTQI+-youth) in the same department until the end of May 2021. After this project ended, I applied for the *Ehe für Alle* campaign, where I was first declined. However, the recruiter told me not to hesitate to apply again for a different position, so I got accepted as a digital campaigner. After the end of the campaign in the end of September, I applied for the *Gletscher-Initiative*, also as a digital campaigner and got accepted. I've been working for this initiative for half a year now and enjoy it a lot. It's nice because it's a bit more permanent, as there is no definitive voting date for this initiative yet.

**Did you work part-time during your studies? If so, to what extent was this helpful in getting a job after the end of your studies?**

During the three years of my Bachelor diploma, I continued working at the hospital as an assistant nurse at the ER, a job I started at during my *Zivildienst*. This taught me to stay calm in very high-pressure situations, which comes in handy in my job now, which can also be fast-paced. There were several other side jobs I pursued, such as working at a psychiatric institute during my *Zivildienst*, doing the subtitles at the Schauspielhaus and working as a tutor for

Corpus linguistics. All of these jobs, but particularly working as a barista, gave me the opportunity to constantly interact with all kinds of people in all kinds of situations, which is an important skill for any job. Something I enjoy about my current job as opposed to working, say in a hospital, is its absence of hierarchy – everybody is on the same level and there are no supervisors per se.

### **To what extent are your studies useful in your daily work?**

I think a lot about the Language Skills and Culture modules these days. Yes, they are difficult, but they certainly helped me greatly with my writing and proof-reading skills. Every time I write an Instagram caption, newsletter or press release or proof-read a text for a colleague, the analytical and structural tools of the modules are my guides. In the same vein, I think literature modules and all the reading, analyzing and talking about texts subconsciously helped me with framing my posts and constructing narratives for them – which is essential in campaigning. It's important to have a clear message and be aware of which images you want to use to clarify it. I'm also well aware some of you may be wondering whether all the writing and analytical skills we learn tailored to the English language also translate to German and I can attest to that – most of my campaigning work is in German and LSC and literature still were – as I said – a great preparation.

### **Is there anything else you'd like to add?**

At first, I was torn between graphic design and English and also thought of changing majors but was really into it once I was in my Master's. So: go with the flow, you'll find your place in society. You don't know where life might take you. Another piece of advice I have is to start early and have side jobs and side hustles. Amongst other things, I got one internship because of my side project "The Silent Reading Rave". I think it set me apart, although I didn't found the project to market myself. Unfortunately, the job market can be cut-throat – many people have a similar background, so you need to sometimes stand out in a way. However, social engagement is not only something companies like to see, but also an opportunity to broaden your horizon and a way to collect working experience.

*The Gletscher-Initiative offers internships which are posted online when available ([gletscher-initiative.ch/jobs](https://gletscher-initiative.ch/jobs)). If you have any further questions for Fabian you can ask for his contact information at [englishstudies@es.uzh.ch](mailto:englishstudies@es.uzh.ch)!*

### 3 Editor of Study Books in Foreign Languages

**Name:** Stefanie Meier

**Last Employer:** Compendio Bildungsmedien AG

**Bachelor Major:** English Language and Literature

**Bachelor Minor:** Spanish Modern Literature and  
German Literature

**Master Major:** English Language and Literature

**Master Minor:** Spanish Modern Literature and  
German Literature



**What was your path after the end of your studies, and how did you get your current job?**

After my *Lizenziat* in 1976, I worked as an assistant at the ES. This gave me time to think about my future career and enough experience to know that, although I found it rewarding, I did not see myself as a teacher for the rest of my career. Towards the end of my assistantship, I chanced upon a job offer in the NZZ as an editor in a publishing company, contributed by AKAD. AKAD is a private school which offers educational programs – such as doing the Matura via the *Zweite Bildungsweg*. Much of the teaching material used in the program is geared to self-study. My job was to develop textbooks (and audio files) for the students. At first, everything I wrote was being supervised, which was quite a humbling experience. There was a drastic difference between writing for uni purposes and writing for learners with a limited linguistic background. Still, I improved a lot over time. At first, I was mostly responsible for English, but later also for Spanish, Italian and French. After six years I was in charge of the complete foreign language department. Within it, we soon realized there was too much work for one person, so I became editor in chief and supervisor of two additional editors. That was a further major step in my career, as I could work in a team and learn management skills. I stayed at the company for forty years.

**Did you work part-time during your studies? If so, to what extent was this helpful in getting a job after the end of your studies?**

After achieving my Matura, I spent a year abroad with a scholarship from Randolph-Macon college in Virginia. There, I worked in the cafeteria. Back in Zurich, I occasionally worked as a substitute teacher or, quite frequently, as a

typist on demand. Back then, we only had mechanical typewriters. Typing well and fast was a good skill to have and also helped me in my job as an editor. I also did a couple of translation jobs, among them a rough-draft translation of an American drama for Swiss TV. And of course, working as an assistant and teaching proseminars was an important experience. I enjoyed it but figured that my colleagues who had always wanted to become teachers were ever so much better suited for the job. Still, if nothing else had worked out, teaching would have been an option to seriously consider.

### **To what extent are your studies useful in your daily work?**

I first thought my knowledge of linguistics and literature would be of little professional use since most of the teaching material I was developing was confined to teaching the basics of language. Additionally, much of what I'd learned in my didactic courses and through my proseminar teaching experience, wasn't necessarily applicable, since I wasn't teaching in front of an actual class. However, for students who had already achieved a higher level of English, my knowledge of literature was useful. Also, linguistics helped me understand how people learn and use language and how it can change and vary. Through this, I could explain linguistic and idiomatic peculiarities, so as to make them more comprehensible to students.

### **Is there anything else you'd like to add?**

Keep your eyes open. Often, short-term jobs can be a foot in the door. If you did well, they'll stay in touch with you. Also, if you're looking for job opportunities, spread the word. Building up a network can be key. Over the years, I've received a number of job offers simply because word about my expertise had spread. Furthermore, you might try sending unsolicited applications. Although there might only be temporary jobs to start with, they can be a steppingstone to full-time employment. So, it's worth putting up with a few detours. Also, have confidence and be determined! And last but not least – to borrow a motto from HRH, the late Prince Philip – always try to squeeze some fun out of all jobs, it is a great motivator.

*If you have any further questions for Stefanie you can get her contact information by reaching out to [englishstudies@es.uzh.ch](mailto:englishstudies@es.uzh.ch)!*

## 4 Marketing Communications Associate

**Name:** Aisling Ehrismann

**Employer:** GoFundMe (Dublin)

**Bachelor Major:** English Literature and Linguistics

**Bachelor Minor:** Scandinavian Studies



**What was your path after the end of your studies, and how did you get your current job?**

Towards the end of my Bachelor studies I did an exchange year in Sweden with my minor, Scandinavian studies. When I came home I quickly realized that I was not ready for my Masters and would prefer to go abroad again. I have always wanted to live in Ireland, so I tried my luck on Irish job portals and typed in the language skills I had. As a German speaker, I had my fair choice of jobs in Ireland – Dublin is home to many European headquarters of large international tech companies which are in need of multilingual employees. I had several interviews with different firms and ultimately decided to join the GoFundMe team, as their values aligned well with my personal views. I started in customer service to get my foot in the door and then transferred to key account management, where I dealt with VIP customers with larger and more complex accounts, advising them on how to increase the success of their campaign. During my work I was always aware of the importance of connections and took the initiative to get to know the employees in the other departments. This is how I met the team manager of the communications department who later asked me to join their team, where I work now.

**Did you work part-time during your studies? If so, to what extent was this helpful in getting a job after the end of your studies?**

My first job during my studies was working at Globus as a sales assistant, which is where I acquired valuable people skills, which is important in every job. Later on, I worked part-time at the ETH student shop where I took the initiative to take on extra responsibilities such as designing posters and was consequently able to broaden my skill set. I also worked in marketing at a film magazine, where I learned about the significance of networking, especially for those of us who do not want to teach. During my exchange year I also did an

unpaid internship as a festival guest coordinator for a film festival, where I was able to broaden my network internationally – in sum, during my part-time work I learned that in order to move up in your career you have to take initiative and be open to always learning new skills.

### **To what extent are your studies useful in your daily work?**

A large part of my daily work consists of writing statements for the media as well as writing social media posts and blog post articles, which are primarily in English. Therefore, the most valuable skill I learned at the ES was how to write a structured text and how to do independent research. When I started this job there was a lot I did not know yet and still had to learn, for example how to work with SEO. But having studied English I was confident that I had the skills to find the sources I needed in order to teach myself the skills I still required. I also think that the ES prepared me well for working in a company like GoFundMe that centers around an American culture, as I had a fair amount of knowledge on American culture.

### **Is there anything else you'd like to add?**

I would recommend that students look for companies they would be interested in working for as opposed to looking for specific job positions. If you like what the company does it is worth taking on any entry-level job and then taking the initiative to work your way up. When looking for a job, my advice is to search for your skills (e.g. English, German) rather than job positions, and to never undersell yourself. Even if you do not fulfill every requirement of the job description, do not hesitate to apply – the research skills we learn at the English Seminar are often enough to help you teach yourself the skills you still need. Lastly, I would like to emphasize the importance of creating a LinkedIn profile and reaching out to people whose job paths interest you. Most people are flattered and are happy to give advice and even mentor you, you just have to take the initiative!

*GoFundMe Dublin often has open entry-level jobs which are posted on their website ([www.gofundme.com/c/careers](http://www.gofundme.com/c/careers)). If you have any further questions for Aisling, just ask for her contact information at [englishstudies@es.uzh.ch](mailto:englishstudies@es.uzh.ch)!*

## 5 Literature PhD Candidate

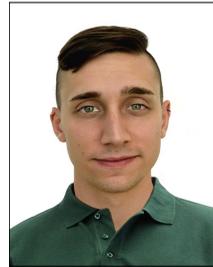
**Name:** Pablo a Marca

**Employer:** Brown University

**Bachelor Major:** English Literature and Linguistics  
& Italian Literature and Linguistics

**Master Major:** Italian Literature and Linguistics

**Master Minor:** English Literature and Linguistics



**What was your path after the end of your studies, and how did you get your current job?**

I used to tell my friends and family that I was aiming to do a PHD at Harvard. When the end of my studies drew nearer in autumn of 2017, I realized: *oh, now is actually the time to go through with it.* However, I decided not to apply to Harvard because I didn't like their PhD program too much. So, I applied to four different renowned universities in the States and two in the UK. I got accepted at Brown University in the spring of 2018 and now research posthumanism in fairy tales, amongst other projects. The application process took me around ten hours. Among the usual requirements are a language proficiency test, writing samples and a motivation letter. Some tips I can give students looking for a PhD candidature (particularly in the States) are: Start early, contact professors with research interests directly in advance and make use of any possible connections you might have at the university. Also, have some confidence. From my experience and in comparison to what I heard from my peers, the English Department at the UZH is a good stepping stone and preparation for a PhD candidature in the States.

**Did you work part-time during your studies? If so, to what extent was this helpful in getting a job after the end of your studies?**

I was a research assistant both in my major and minor, for the majority of my studies. It certainly looked good on my CV and probably helped a little with getting a PhD position. But I am optimistic you also have a good chance of getting a position without this bonus. Also, to bridge the time between the end of my studies in Zurich and start of my PhD, I did an internship at a publisher's, which I obtained through an unsolicited application. Naturally, the salary was

on the lower end, but I had the chance to gain some experience in copy editing, transcribing, translating and design.

**To what extent are your studies useful in your daily work?**

The writing skills we are taught at the English Seminar are excellent, as they are very similar to how they write in the States. The formal training is a good preparation for the exam I had to take to be admitted. Also, it has been a nice advantage that we have to do both literature and linguistics, which is not the case everywhere. It has helped me with some courses I took in the states. Also, the English Seminar offers a great variety of courses, which was helpful. If only I hadn't run out of credits... (still finished my BA with 15 extra ECTS).

**Is there anything else you'd like to add?**

It is perhaps important to note that you do less close reading and more fast and efficient reading in the States (around one book per class per week). Also, it is important to look closely at your PhD job offer, as many positions are not paid or offer no or only reduced pay in summer. Furthermore; for students interested in doing their PhD in the States it is important to note that it functions a bit differently from PhDs in Switzerland. For example, you have to take courses for the first two years of your PhD at different departments, but you are also free to do your PhD in other fields than you did your Master's degree in. Also, like mentioned before, you are free to pursue several projects.

*If you have any further questions for Pablo you can get his contact information by reaching out to [englishstudies@es.uzh.ch](mailto:englishstudies@es.uzh.ch)!*

## 6 Editorial Associate

**Name:** Angela Ferreira

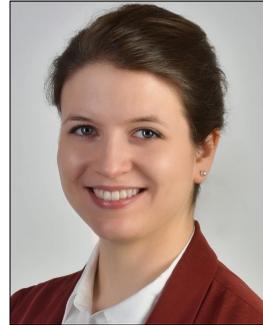
**Employer:** Diogenes Verlag

**Bachelor Major:** English Literature and Linguistics

**Bachelor Minor:** Business Administration

**Master Major:** English Literature and Linguistics

**Master Minor:** Business Administration



**What was your path after the end of your studies, and how did you get your current job?**

I have always had a passion for literature, but ironically I never thought of publishing as a career until I saw the movie *The Proposal*, in which Ryan Reynolds works as an editorial assistant. However, I didn't really know how one becomes an editorial assistant and the path to my current position turned out to be a bit more winding than I had imagined. During my studies, I held many different jobs, including one as a bookseller at The Bookshop by Orell Füssli. After graduation I did an internship as a junior project manager at Swissnex, the Swiss science consulate in Boston. While I learned a lot from this experience, I missed working with books which is why, upon returning to Switzerland, I accepted a position as the head of the department at The Bookshop. I still wasn't working in publishing yet, but was getting closer to my goal, as I was nevertheless working closely with publishers! To get even more insight into the field, I ended up doing a six-week publishing course at Columbia university, which gave me a broader idea of the type of jobs that exist in a publishing company. After the course I worked at the International Relations office at UZH for a year and then returned to Orell Füssli until a job at Diogenes Verlag opened up. I was originally hired as a maternity leave cover, but have now signed the contract to stay long term! As an editorial associate you are not the one to give the authors notes, but essentially take care of all the other tasks that belong to the editorial process – I make sure that reprinted books are in order and also work on things such as audiobook production, for example! As you can see, my career path wasn't necessarily straight-forward, but every job I had got me one step closer to my goal of working at a publishing company.

**Did you work part-time during your studies? If so, to what extent was this helpful in getting a job after the end of your studies?**

It may sound bizarre, but working at McDonalds during my studies taught me so many skills that I use daily at my current job. I not only worked with people outside of my university bubble, but also learned to work very efficiently and to manage different tasks, while prioritizing and staying calm. However, working at Orell Füssli during my studies was where I learned most of what I know about books today. While I of course learned about literature in my English studies, working in a bookstore taught me about the practical aspect of book production, such as ISBN numbers, book prizes and best sellers, working with different suppliers, and how customers look for a book when they enter a bookstore.

### **To what extent are your studies useful in your daily work?**

Of course my English language skills and being able to present in front of people is a great advantage in my profession. However, I believe at the English Seminar students quickly learn that they are responsible for finding the information they need efficiently, whether this is for a research paper or for your study planning. This skill of independent researching is invaluable for my work today, as are the time management skills I acquired while studying. While I no longer write papers myself, the writing skills I learned taught me what a well-structured text looks like, which is a skill I make use of daily. More than anything, I was able to deepen my passion for literature and developed an interest and open-minded perspective towards other cultures.

### **Is there anything else you'd like to add?**

Don't expect to have your dream job by 26 – publishing is a difficult field to get into, so in the meantime try to find a job that is as close to your goal as possible and work your way up from there. Until then, do some private research and learn as much as you can about the field you are interested in! Another tip I can generally give students is to not hesitate to apply to the same company several times – I applied to Diogenes Verlag twice and then made use of the contact I had already established with HR. Lastly, if you know exactly which profession is your end goal, look at other's career paths on LinkedIn who have your dream job to see how they got where they are now. Your path will likely be very different, which is perfectly fine, but it could give you some inspiration and an idea of where to start.

*If you have any further questions for Angela you can get her contact information by reaching out to [englishstudies@es.uzh.ch](mailto:englishstudies@es.uzh.ch)!*

## 7 Forensic Phonetician

**Name:** Sarah Lim

**Employer:** Zurich Forensic Institute

**Bachelor Major:** English Literature and Linguistics

**Bachelor Minor:** General Linguistics, Anthropology

**Master Major:** English Linguistics

**Master Minor:** English Literature, General Linguistics



### **What was your path after the end of your studies, and how did you get your current job?**

Already during my Masters I started working at the phonetics lab at UZH where I worked with (German) audio recordings. After my graduation, I was made aware that the Zurich forensic institute was hiring – the speech and audio team is a rather new addition to the institute and rarely has open positions, so I knew I had to take advantage of this opportunity and send in my application! Forensic phonetics cannot (yet) be studied in Switzerland, so my colleagues and I all come from different fields of linguistics, but we all work mainly on German audio recordings. Police officers or state attorneys can contact the Zurich forensic institute, for instance when they need us to transcribe audio files (often of very poor quality) using various methods, such as auditory analysis and reading spectrograms. We essentially work with anything where voice recordings and criminal activity intersect, a classic example of which would be ransom calls.

### **Did you work part-time during your studies? If so, to what extent was this helpful in getting a job after the end of your studies?**

My work at the phonetics lab during my Masters prepared me well for what I do now and I was able to transfer skills I learned during my English studies to German linguistics (i.e. phonetic transcription of speech). However, before I started my career as a forensic phonetician, I was on my way to becoming a teacher and often took on substitute positions teaching English (and an Old and Middle English tutorial!) during my studies. Even though I am not teaching at the moment, the linguistic insight that teaching English as an L2 provided me with is invaluable. It allowed me to become more familiar with L2 language

competencies, by analyzing transfer mistakes that L2 learners make based on their L1, for example.

### **To what extent are your studies useful in your daily work?**

My career path has stayed rather close to my studies in English linguistics and I use the knowledge I acquired in phonetics, phonology, and general linguistics every day. However, it is not only theoretical knowledge that has been useful for my work – one valuable skill I learned at the English Seminar was how to write a well-structured text. This is an indispensable skill in my profession, where I often write reports in which I need to analyze and present my findings in a comprehensive way. While you will learn how to write texts in most language study programs, I would argue that the English Seminar is particularly good at teaching a writing style that is both academic and understandable.

### **Is there anything else you'd like to add?**

I would like to emphasize that even though teaching is the career path that is typically pushed at the English Seminar, there are far more opportunities that are open to English graduates than most students are aware of. I planned on becoming a teacher for a long time and could still imagine going back to that, but when this position opened up at the Zurich forensic institute I knew I had to take that opportunity. What I'm trying to say is that teaching is a valid option that is great to fall back on, but don't limit yourself to that because you think there is nothing else out there. Secondly, even though I probably would not have wanted to hear this when I was a student, keep in mind that the study program you choose and the modules you end up taking will ultimately affect the possibilities and opportunities you have later. When I applied for my job as a forensic phonetician, one of the things that set me apart from the other candidates was that I had taken a seminar in forensic linguistics during my studies. I do not mean to scare anyone into overthinking all of their decisions, but rather that you should be aware of opportunities around you and to take advantage of them when they arise!

*If you have any further questions for Sarah you can get her contact information by reaching out to [englishstudies@es.uzh.ch](mailto:englishstudies@es.uzh.ch)!*

## 8 ESG and Sustainability Risk Specialist

**Name:** Bruno Bischoff

**Employer:** ECOFACT AG

**Bachelor Major:** English Philology

**Bachelor Minor:** International Relations & Nordic Philology

**Master Major:** English Philology

**Master Minor:** International Relations & Nordic Philology



### **What was your path after the end of your studies, and how did you get your current job?**

I wanted to work for a large company dealing with international as well as contemporary political affairs. After being declined such a position at Credit Suisse immediately after concluding university, they offered me a job in the project management office of an international IT project. I had no experience in IT, but my translation skills were important to the project. This gave me an entry into Credit Suisse as it helped me understand the functionalities and services of a bank. That is what opened the door to a job in public affairs at the same bank two years later. During my time at CS, I attended professional trainings including basic banking know-how and a post-grad course for professional PR and media at MAZ – Swiss School of Journalism. In the early 2000s Credit Suisse created its sustainability department. As sustainability was always a personal value of mine, I changed to that department and later became the head of Sustainability Affairs. The team was also international, with employees in London, Hong Kong, New York, and Zurich. Half a year ago, I realized I had been working for the same company for 20 years and while it was always interesting, challenging and rewarding, I wanted a change and joined a small consultancy firm to advise companies on the management social and environmental risks.

### **Did you work part-time during your studies? If so, to what extent was this helpful in getting a job after the end of your studies?**

I spent a year in Scotland as a German language assistant. This gave me some insight into teaching and made me realize this wasn't something I could imagine doing forever. Besides this experience, I also worked as a truck driver for my father's transport business during semester breaks, which gave me con-

confidence in dealing with different kinds of people and helped me step outside of my university bubble. During the last two years of my studies, I also worked part-time as a guard for Securitas which exposed me to various people and trained me to act in a more confident way.

### **To what extent are your studies useful in your daily work?**

One key benefit of my studies is a good command of English. Familiarity and practice in expressing myself in English verbally or in written reports are very useful. All the more so if companies have multinational staff and locations around the world, as is the case with Credit Suisse and ECOFACT. Moreover, I can build on analytic capabilities developed as part of my studies in English Philology and International Relations, for example identifying and evaluating the key environmental or social risks of a bank transaction, making sense of reports and studies on climate change or biodiversity, and connecting the dots to understand the bigger picture. Finally, in my current consultant job I support financial institutions and other companies in setting up processes and policies to manage sustainability risks. For this, understanding the challenges they face and the strategic goals they pursue from their perspective is important – a skill I developed when conducting literary analyses during my studies.

### **Is there anything else you'd like to add?**

Don't expect to get your dream job right after graduation. Rather, have a rough plan how to get there, e.g., by applying in a thematically adjacent field or in an organization that offers the job of your dreams, and then take step after step towards it. And if your dream changes, don't worry – there are ample other opportunities worth pursuing.

*ECOFACT regularly recruits university graduates (see their website at <https://join.com/companies/ecofact>). If you have any further questions for Bruno, just ask for his contact information at [englishstudies@es.uzh.ch](mailto:englishstudies@es.uzh.ch)!*

## 9 Specialist in Innovation & Society

**Name:** Gianna Conrad

**Employer:** The Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia

**Bachelor Major:** English Literature and Linguistics

**Bachelor Minor:** German and Italian Literature

**Master Major:** English Literature and Linguistics

**Master Minor:** Italian Literature



**What was your path after the end of your studies, and how did you get your current job?**

Already during my MA, I worked at Kaufleuten Kultur and organized cultural events there. After graduation I continued to do so, but also got a part-time position as a research and teaching assistant in the Italian literature department at UZH, so I had one foot in both worlds; one in hands-on event management and one in academia. I eventually decided that I wanted to put my knowledge to use in a practical way and started working for the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia. With a head office in Zurich and a network of offices abroad, the Foundation fosters contemporary art production in Switzerland and helps disseminate and promote Swiss arts inland and abroad. Since joining the Foundation, I have worked for different divisions and sectors (literature, performing arts and with the directorate team) before taking my position as Innovation & Society specialist. My main job now is working with both artists and cultural institutions who are active in different artistic disciplines. What we do is assessing funding applications as well as elaborating new strategies for funding measures in the area of innovation and society.

**Did you work part-time during your studies? If so, to what extent was this helpful in getting a job after the end of your studies?**

At different points of my studies I worked in a clothing store, in a restaurant, as a language teacher, and at one point had a translating job in Rome, where I worked for a year! This is what I would call my 'experimental' phase in which I made a point of gaining work experience in many different fields. The fact that I've worked in so many areas allowed me to expand my repertoire of job experience and to build a large network. During my MA I then began working at Kaufleuten Kultur which ultimately set my path that led me to cultural pro-

motion. All of these jobs allowed me to broaden my horizon – most importantly, I learned to interact and work with all kinds of people from various cultural and professional backgrounds, which is an invaluable skill to have in my job.

### **To what extent are your studies useful in your daily work?**

As I use English in my job every day, being proficient in English was a requirement. Nowadays, English serves as a door-opener, especially if you are working in a company with a global network. In general I would say that studying humanities provides you with an analytical tool kit that can be applied in countless other disciplines! My studies at the ES taught me how to engage critically with texts and other mediums, which is certainly important for my daily work which revolves around various forms of culture. At the ES I furthermore learned mental flexibility and an openness for engaging with a variety of topics which is useful for practical tasks like organizing events and scheduling meetings, but also for more abstract tasks such as writing cultural promotion strategies.

### **Is there anything else you'd like to add?**

My main advice to students is to not wait until the last year of your studies to start experimenting and discovering your interests. It can be comfortable writing all of your seminar papers on the same topic or genre, but if you step out of your comfort zone every now and then you may be surprised to find new topics and fields that grab your interest. Students with an MA in English literature and linguistics have an incredibly broad range of career options – this is of course a blessing and a curse. It can make it difficult for students to find their path, but at the end of the day students should take a bit of pressure off of themselves. Very few graduates will choose a job right after graduation and stay there for the rest of their lives – there will always be a bit of zig-zagging in your career path and sometimes it's about being in the right place at the right time and making the most of the opportunities you are given.

*Pro Helvetia regularly offers internships which are posted on their website (see <https://prohelvetia.ch/en/jobs/>). If you have any further questions for Gianna, just ask for her contact information at [englishstudies@es.uzh.ch](mailto:englishstudies@es.uzh.ch)!*