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KNOW
yourself

EXPLORE
the market

PRESENT
your skills

MEET
your employer

START
your job right

BECOMING
successful

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KNOW

yourself

Which job is right for you?

While some of your classmates might already have a crystal-clear vision of their path after university, others won't have the faintest idea. So, what are your plans?

You can start to prepare for the first steps in your career while you are still at university. We recommend taking an active role in student projects, gaining initial experience through internships and work placements, finding a suitable mentor and building your network **|24|**. You could start by attending meet-ups at the students' association or events hosted by the TUM Community: www.community.tum.de.

Alternatively, you might decide to keep studying for a more advanced qualification. After all, there are plenty of good reasons to enroll on a Master's program. You can deepen your expertise and specialize in a certain field, which will increase your chances of reaching a management position in future and securing a higher salary **|36|**. The same goes for a PhD: if you're playing with the idea of studying for a doctorate, you should consider whether you enjoy taking responsibility and enjoy in-depth research **|38|**. It would also be useful to reflect on whether you see your future in academia or a career in industry.

In any case, when it comes to searching for a job, it's vital that you have an accurate picture of yourself and your abilities. Think about how well developed your qualifications are in terms of specialist knowledge, methodological expertise, personal skills and social skills **|26|**. In doing so, you will come to know yourself much better – which will help you to make clear-eyed decisions in your job search. You should review your assessment of yourself by speaking with contacts in your network **|30|**. You can also ask your mentors for advice, speak with potential employers, check out online jobs portals and contact alumni in different fields and industries.

We often learn best from real-life examples, so we asked four alumni who studied Electrical Engineering, Computer Science, Industrial Engineering and Business Administration what their personal strengths are and how they apply them in their jobs **|32|**.

In addition, TUM Alumna Maria Sievert explains **|44|** why she never considered the conventional approach to starting a career. Instead, she founded her own company – inveox – with her former fellow student (and now her husband) while still at university. After all, this is another option open to you: just found your own company and become your own boss!

Entering the world of work will certainly feel like a big step. That's only natural, as school and university will have dominated your life for at least around 17 years of your life. You now face a period of transition that entails considerable cultural adjustment and changes to your social roles.

However, this transition can also be hugely enjoyable. A whole new world lies ahead of you, and the opportunity to realize your potential in a very different way. Especially at the beginning of your career, the possibilities are endless: you will have plenty of opportunities to try out new things and question the old **|46|**. Our message to you is clear: enjoy this special time and make the most of it!

Discover your skills

Use your time at university to explore your professional goals and desires without pressure from the outside. Here are four tips for you.

Get to know yourself

You're in the middle of your studies and your life lies before you like a blank sheet of paper. What's your first brushstroke going to be: What line of work are you interested in? What environment would you like to work in? You can only take these decisions if you know yourself well. So take the time while you're studying to try things out, also off the beaten track. An Erasmus semester in Barcelona might be of interest, an internship in the USA, the student initiative on social entrepreneurship or the debating club? Be open to whatever you come across along the way. If you're not keen on the field of study you've chosen, change it. Take every opportunity to get to know yourself and find out what it is you want. It will never be so easy to change track as right now. Always keep at the back of your mind that your career grows together with your skills and interests – and the detours may be the very thing you need for your personal growth.

Look for a mentor

After you graduate, there will be many doors open to you. But which route should you take? Is it better to take a job in a big corporation or in a start-up? Or would you like to add a PhD? You will find it easier to take all these decisions if you can discuss them with somebody who knows not only you but also the job market. So look for a mentor while you're still on your degree course. These are people with experience who pass on their professional knowledge to you as a mentee with less life and/or professional experience. The aim is to support you in the development of your career and your personal growth. A mentor can offer you guidance, give you many helpful tips along the way, establish contacts or boost your self-confidence for applications. For example, both students and alumni can find a mentor through the TUM Community. You can find out more about the mentoring programs at TUM at www.community.tum.de/en/mentoring-at-tum

During your studies, TUM offers many opportunities to experiment and to get to know your own skills and strengths in the process.

A semester abroad can reveal new paths for you to explore:

www.international.tum.de/en/global/going-abroad

On the TUM Jobportal you will find lots of offers for student jobs and internships in the industry:

www.tum.de/jobboerse

The range of student initiatives on offer at TUM will provide you with practical experience coupled with generous space for your creativity:

www.tum.de/en/community/campus-life/student-clubs

Be inspired

It's also a good idea to start networking early. This is not about going to boring events where you mainly have to get rid of your visiting cards. In fact, the trick is to get to know like-minded people with whom you can swap stories about what you've been through and who you can learn from. You may also meet managers who know what's needed in companies – and who may even recommend you for a job. For example, you could start your networking by joining the get-togethers of your student council or at alumni meetings of the TUM Community. There are also specific networks of professional associations or those for entrepreneurs and founders or the Women of TUM. You will also find numerous subject and country-specific groups in the TUM Community – ranging from TUM India to TUM Australia, TUM Mathematics Alumni to the Sustainability Professionals. Take a look at www.community.tum.de/forum.

Gain practical experience

Admittedly, you will learn plenty of professional knowledge and the latest research results in lectures and seminars, but don't forget there's a lot to be discovered outside the lecture theatre. Use your study time to take on internships, by all means in different areas that might be of interest to you. You could maybe look for a student job where you can gain insight into the working world over a longer period of time. By the way, over 81 percent of employers stated the following in the job trends study: Practical experience during your studies counts for more than a very good degree within the minimum period of study. That's because it will provide you with exclusive insights into different areas of a company, strengthen your network and give you valuable practical experience.

Set up your skills profile

Whether professional, methodical, personal or social – take your time to identify and sift through your skills and character traits. A well-rounded skills profile will benefit your application.

How would you assess yourself: Are you a communicative networker who finds it easy to strike up a conversation and always has the latest news at their fingertips? Or are you a hands-on doer who develops loads of new ideas and puts them into practice with great dedication and sense of purpose? There are almost infinite variations for such self-assessments. If you are able to arrive at a description of yourself by such means, you can explain to your potential employer exactly how you would benefit the company. Another advantage is that the better you know your own personal characteristics, the easier it is for you to use them depending on the situation – or even to counter them, when and where necessary.

In the following, you can find out how to assess your own personal, social, professional and methodical skills. For example your *personal character* traits: How interested are you in new experiences and adventures? How well organized are you and how carefully do you work? Are you calm or do you tend to be impulsive? Your *social skills* are what enables you to live with other people and get on with them: Do you enjoy working in a team with other people? Are you cooperative or do you tend to be competitively minded? Do you find it easy to talk about conflict? Are you willing to take on the role of team leader or manager? In short: This is about how you deal and interact with other people, a vital quality for working with people in a job on a daily basis. Your *professional skills* on the other hand relate to the technical knowledge typical of your sector, while *methodical* skills are separate from professional skills as they help you generally to solve problems and organize your tasks.



can
do
that!

Big Five personality test One excellent way of getting to know yourself better is to take the Big Five personality test. Whether for personal or social skills, your personality is mapped on the basis of five main dimensions. According to the theory, there are five main dimensions that are responsible for the features of your personality. Openness to experience (openness), Conscientiousness (perfectionism), Extraversion (sociability), Agreeableness (consideration, willingness to cooperate, empathy) and Neuroticism (emotional lability and fragility). You can find reliable Big Five personality tests on the Internet which will provide your results in 10 to 15 minutes.

Check-U-Test You can find more detailed skills test, in which your professional preferences and interests are also scanned and surveyed on the website of the Ruhr University Bochum or the German Federal Employment Agency. You should schedule at least two hours for each of the two tests. Some of the tasks are tricky and have to be done under time pressure, so it's better to do them after a good night's sleep. The Federal Employment Agency's "Check-U-Test" tries to compile a list of professions or fields of study that match your strengths by analyzing your abilities, social skills, professional preferences and interests.

Borakel Test The Ruhr University Bochum has developed the “Borakel Test” for prospective students. But the test is also stimulating for students as the comprehensive test results analyzing your motivation, performance or professional ambitions are broken down in detail. For example, you will get an assessment of your management motivation, sociability, stress resistance and spontaneity – that will be of help to you now, too, ahead of graduation.

To get going, you initially analyze your skills yourself and then dialog with fellow students and your mentor. Also take your CV and think about the skills you have acquired at which stations in your life. The skills you have learned during your studies, your experience from internships or student jobs, qualifications gained from extracurricular work or student initiatives but also IT or language skills – they all count here. It will be of enormous benefit to swap notes with other people in your group (30). Put your heads together to consider what the results may mean for your careers: What areas of responsibility are suited to an extroverted, decisive person or which would fit someone who was creative and good at working in teams? You will find inspiration on page 32: There TUM Alumni talk about which of their strengths they are able to use in their careers.

TUM Mentoring

A good mentor is worth his or her weight in gold: At *TUM Mentoring by Alumni for Students*, former students of TUM are there to help with questions and share valuable experience as your sparring partner. They assist you as a TUM student or alumni in making the best decisions with regard to your personal goals and setting the stage correctly for the future – both for your professional and private life:

www.community.tum.de/en/mentoring

TUM Mentoring Job Talk

The short mentoring format “Job Talk” offers multifaceted insights into various sectors: Here, a specific question is discussed and answered in a conversation with your mentor. You can get in touch at short notice and uncomplicated by phone, virtually or in person.

www.community.tum.de/en/mentoring/#jobtalk

Alumni & Career regularly offers webinars and advice on how to develop your profile: www.community.tum.de/en/career



TUM
TIP

my skills profile

Your profile could comprise these skills, for example:

professional

- Technical knowledge
- Manual skills and practical experience
- Knowledge of trending topics
- Foreign languages or programming languages

methodical

- Time management and self-management
- Presentational skills
- Media skills
- Organizational skills
- Analytical thinking
- Decisiveness

personality

- Honest
- Trustworthy
- Proactive
- Creative
- Well-organized
- Calm

social

- Good team player
- Cooperative
- Combative
- Generous
- Sensitive
- Assertive

What are your skills good for?

You've learned to assess and weight your skills.
Now it's time to swap notes with other people and seek inspiration.

To get a reliable assessment of your personality, strengths and weaknesses you should have a conversation with people who know you well. Parents and close friends can be helpful. It also makes sense to talk to people who know you in a professional context and have a good feel for the job market. Your supervisor, for example, can provide feedback on whether you have already acquired sufficient project management knowledge – and where there may still be room for improvement. Your mentor can identify how you can acquire the knowledge needed for your dream job. For a sound analysis of your skills, you should ...

1

ask mentors

They are familiar with the labor market, current trends and developments but also opportunities and challenges, and they can give you tips on how your qualities and skills can win the day. Mentors are worth their weight in gold as they know you without having any close ties with you – which means they can be more honest and direct than friends and family may be able to. You can find short self-assessment forms on the Internet on key skills such as reliability, perseverance or your ability to accept criticism. Maybe your mentor can fill in one of these forms about you and the two of you can discuss it afterwards. You can find out more about mentoring programs at TUM at www.community.tum.de/en/mentoring-at-tum.

take
action

2

browse on online professional portals

Search for people on social media portals like Xing or LinkedIn or the TUM Community who have a similar educational background to yourself. What professional or methodical skills do these persons mention in their profiles? How do they describe their abilities? It may also be helpful to look at the profiles of people who are working in a field which you would like to work in. That way you can see what skills may be important for your dream job.

www.community.tum.de/forum

3

approach employers

What could you achieve in a company with your professional skills, what kind of projects could you work on and in what departments? You can get fast, straightforward feedback on your CV at career fairs like the IKOM at TUM (www.ikom.tum.de). The exciting part is to learn what they spontaneously offer you when the HR recruiters see your CV. Why would they recommend this job in particular to

you? Your managers from your internships can also provide valuable suggestions. Ask questions such as:

Where do you think my career path should take me? Where do my strengths lie? It's to see how many new ideas such external assessments can generate.

4

get to know alumni from different professions

Network with fellow-students and alumni with different professional backgrounds. Around 83,000 alumni and students around the world make up the TUM Community, TUM's lifelong network. For example, they can give you an insight into specific career fields, including abroad. Every year, alumni pass on their experiences in webinars at TUM: www.community.tum.de/events. Or team up with your fellow-students: If you're job-hunting at the same time, you can help each other in preparing your skills profiles and even fine-tuning your applications together.

Things are not black and white when it comes to soft skills: A person with highly introverted character traits can still be a good manager, just as someone who is creative and ambitious can still be a good team player. Always remember that your personal and social characteristics are not cast in stone. Someone who shies away from conflict when they're young may have found a way of dealing with it proactively later in life. Someone who did not enjoy the spotlight as a child can still stand on stage later in life without breaking into a sweat.