



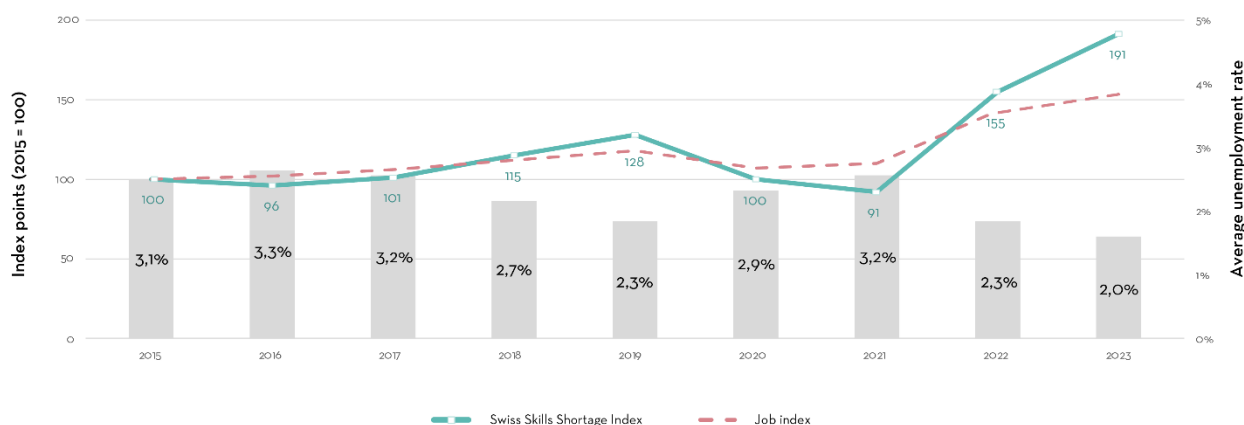
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Adecco Group Switzerland press release

Swiss Skills Shortage Index 2023: Ongoing shortage of skilled workers

Zurich, 28 November 2023 – The shortage of skilled workers reached a peak in Switzerland in 2022, yet there are few signs of the issue abating in 2023. Despite declining growth momentum due to the current economic slowdown, the skills shortage has increased by 24%, reaching record highs. Recruiting staff remains a challenge for companies. Vacancies for health specialists, IT experts and technical engineers are currently proving particularly difficult to fill. This is highlighted by the Swiss Skills Shortage Index published by the Adecco Group Switzerland and the Swiss Job Market Monitor project undertaken by the University of Zurich.

Swiss Skills Shortage Index, Job Index and Unemployment Rate



The Skills Shortage Index rose sharply in 2022 due to the economic recovery that followed the lifting of Covid-19 measures. This shortage of skilled workers is only worsening in 2023. Despite the current economic challenges, ranging from inflation and the strength of the Swiss franc to a weakening global economy and growing global uncertainty, there is no sign of the shortage of skilled workers easing any time soon.

Although the rate of increase of the Skills Shortage Index is now falling due to the weaker economy – having grown a whopping 69% in 2022, as opposed to just **24%** in 2023 – the **index has still risen to a new high**. This is primarily due to two factors: the number of job seekers has fallen significantly, causing the unemployment rate to reach a low of 2% in 2023, while the number of open positions has increased by 7% on the previous year. The primary driver of this development appears to be the domestic sector. While export-oriented industries are grappling with a slowdown in global demand, domestic market-oriented sectors, such as hospitality, have largely seen [robust domestic demand](#). This also explains why [domestically oriented sectors are still planning to increase jobs despite the economic slowdown](#).

'The current overheating in the labour market is mainly due to the strong economic recovery that began after the Covid-19 measures were lifted and significantly boosted the demand for skilled workers. Although the sombre economic outlook for the coming year and the notably declining momentum in the Skills Shortage Index suggest that we will start to see some easing in the short to medium term, the shortage of skilled workers will continue to be an issue for Swiss companies over the long term. Factors such as the ageing population, the advance of digitalisation and transition to a green economy will continue to drive this development into the future.'

Marcel Keller, Country President Adecco Group Switzerland



Shortage of skilled workers in healthcare and technical professions

As in the previous year, the following category are experiencing the most acute shortage of skilled workers: **Specialists in healthcare professions** (e.g. qualified nurses, endocrinologists and pharmacists), **developers and analysts of software and IT applications** (e.g. SAP consultants, software engineers and IT quality managers) and **engineering and related specialists** (e.g. mechanical engineers, heating planners and microsystems engineers). While the shortage of qualified **specialists in healthcare professions** and **engineering and related specialists** continues to worsen in comparison to the previous year, the situation is easing significantly for **developers and analysts of software and IT applications**.

'The turbulence in the IT industry has left a distinct trace on the job market for developers and analysts of software and IT applications. Not only has the number of vacancies fallen significantly, but the number of job seekers has also increased significantly. This is also reflected in the unemployment figures for the IT industry. [In September 2023, the number of unemployed people grew by a massive 44.8% compared to the same month last year.](#) As a result, the shortage of skilled workers in this category has eased significantly compared to the previous year.'

Yanik Kipfer, Swiss Job Market Monitor, University of Zurich

Technical professions are particularly strongly represented in the top 10 of the skills shortage ranking. This reflects the nature of Swiss industry, which specialises in the production of complex, technically sophisticated niche products with high added value. The latest [quarterly survey by industry association Swissmechanic](#) highlights this trend. In the third quarter, SMEs in the mechanical, electrical and metal sectors identified the lack of technical staff as one of their biggest challenges.

The shortage of skilled labour in technical professions is not limited to occupational groups that require a tertiary education, such as a university degree, a degree from a university of applied sciences or training at a higher technical college. It also extends to occupational groups that primarily require an apprenticeship. In addition to engineering and comparable skilled workers, electricians, and electronics technicians as well as polymechanics, production mechanics, machine mechanics and fitters are also experiencing an acute shortage of skilled labour.

Skilled labour shortages are increasingly turning into a general labour shortage

Categories at the lower end of the ranking are predominantly seeing an oversupply of skilled workers, with more applicants than vacancies. In last place are **unskilled workers**, including window cleaners, road markers and furniture movers. They are followed by **managers** and then **general office and secretarial workers and other office workers**, including professions such as clerks, HR administrators and proofreaders.

The divergence of trends between different categories is especially striking this year: while the oversupply of skilled workers in the categories in the bottom half of the ranking has noticeably reduced, the shortage of skilled workers in the top half remains largely steady. This means that the shortage of skilled workers is increasingly turning into a general labour shortage. Even in categories with lower qualification requirements, such as unskilled workers, the oversupply of skilled workers has been greatly reduced. As a result, these workers are becoming increasingly difficult for companies to recruit.



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'We are now experiencing an actual labour shortage on the Swiss labour market today – it is no longer merely a shortage of skilled workers. It is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit new employees even in categories where there is no acute shortage of skilled workers. In the catering industry, for instance, competition for trained chefs and trained service staff is increasingly fierce. If they are to find staff and skilled workers, companies must innovate, make better use of the internal labour market and consider taking on foreign workers. The potential of the internal labour market can be better harnessed by investing in training, upskilling and further education, recruiting career changers, offering more flexible working conditions and considering the targeted use of temporary employees to build up internal expertise.'

Martin Meyer, Leader of Adecco in German-speaking Switzerland

Skills shortage worsening sharply in German-speaking Switzerland

In both German-speaking Switzerland and French and Italian-speaking Switzerland, the shortage of skilled workers has increased significantly compared to the previous year. While the shortage of skilled workers in German-speaking Switzerland has increased 28%, French and Italian-speaking Switzerland recorded a smaller but still significant increase, at 14%.

The greater increase in German-speaking Switzerland is due to a more marked decrease in job seekers (–16%) and a moderate increase in job vacancies (+8%). By contrast, French and Italian-speaking Switzerland saw a more moderate decline in job seekers (–10%) and only a slight increase in vacancies (+3%) compared to the previous year. This indicates that the labour market in German-speaking Switzerland is undergoing far greater change than in French and Italian-speaking Switzerland.



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About the Adecco Group Swiss Job Market Index (Job Index)

In collaboration with the [Swiss Job Market Monitor \(SJMM\)](#) at the Sociological Institute of the University of Zurich, the Adecco Group Switzerland publishes the Adecco Group Swiss Job Market Index (Job Index) in January, April, July and October. The Job Index provides Switzerland with a scientifically substantiated and comprehensive measure of the development of job offers on online job portals and company websites. It is based on representative quarterly surveys of job offers in the press, on online job portals and on company websites.

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