

Press Release

A different approach to IT Training: 40% of women in the selection process at 42 Zurich

Zurich, 30.09.2026 – At 42 Zurich, the nonprofit educational campus in Zurich, the first selection process for its free IT training program has begun. 107 participants are vying for a spot. Forty percent of the participants are women—a figure that traditional computer science education in Switzerland does not come close to matching.

In mid-September, 107 IT enthusiasts took the plunge. In the so-called “Piscine”—the four-week admissions process at 42 Zurich—participants dive into the basics of programming.

Neither previous grades nor a specific educational background are required for admission. Prior programming experience is not necessary. Without lectures or instructors, participants solve problems in the C programming language and work in a Unix environment. The focus is on motivation, teamwork, and a willingness to engage in peer-to-peer learning.

40% of participants are women: a strong signal to redesign IT education

With women making up 40 percent of the first cohort, 42 Zurich stands out in the Swiss IT education landscape. 42 Zurich attributes this in part to its unique admissions and training model. Formal educational credentials and grades are not decisive factors for admission. What matters most are motivation, the ability to learn, and team spirit. The program is project-based, incorporates gamification elements, and emphasizes peer-to-peer learning, entirely without hierarchies. Students support one another and build their knowledge together. Studies show that learning models with less emphasis on grade comparisons and competitive pressure make it easier to access STEM subjects. The program is also explicitly aimed at working professionals and people with caregiving responsibilities who want to change career paths and are looking for flexibility. The learning campus takes this into account and is open around the clock.

Cristina Bucher, CEO of 42 Zurich, says: “If four out of ten participants are women, this shows that there is no shortage of women with an interest in and talent for technology. What matters is the opportunities we create and how we structure learning. Especially with AI, we need people who can learn independently, quickly familiarize themselves with new topics, and work together to find solutions. For this, curiosity and the ability to learn are often more important than a linear educational path.”

Win-win for participants and businesses

Those who successfully complete the Piscine will begin the first training program at 42 Zurich in January 2027. The training lasts 12 to 24 months. It begins with the fundamentals of programming and IT systems and progresses through hands-on projects to the architecture of autonomous systems. Students choose their own specializations, such as cybersecurity. AI is firmly embedded in the curriculum.

Experience from the international 42 network shows that 93 percent of graduates find a job immediately upon completion. For companies, 42 provides additional access to qualified IT professionals and fosters innovation. The AI Innovation Labs and hackathons offered by 42 are currently particularly popular. Companies bring specific challenges to the table and, together with the students, develop functional prototypes within two days. Especially in the age of AI, this allows new applications to be tested for feasibility and economic potential in an agile manner, without months of preliminary analysis. These projects often lead to internships, during which students further develop and implement the solutions they created within the company.

Steve Vaquin, Process Manager for the Technology Division at Groupe Mutuel says: „42 provides companies with talented individuals who are technically strong and also bring resilience, initiative, and team spirit to the table. They are open to feedback, offer new perspectives, and integrate quickly into the team. My advice to companies: Seize the opportunity and put your trust in the talent from 42.“

Quotes for usage

"Traditional educational pathways often reach their limits in today's rapidly changing technological world. 42 Zurich is breaking down these structures with its hands-on, accessible approach—a forward-looking initiative that we, as a foundation, wholeheartedly support in order to make Switzerland's digital transformation more inclusive and dynamic."

Sibylle Feltrin Ilar, Managing Director of Asuera Stiftung

"In just nine months, 42 laid the foundation for my entry into the IT field. I learned how to tackle complex software projects—with full focus and at my own pace. The challenging tasks, the mutual learning, and the rigorous code reviews continue to shape me to this day. 42 teaches far more than just technical know-how: I've learned to quickly find my bearings in complex environments and to independently come up with viable solutions."

Ralf Weber, Software Engineer at RIVR und Alumnus von 42

"I applied to 42 Zürich to complement my academic and professional background with a more practical perspective and strengthen my programming skills. The peer-learning approach, with its iterative cycles of problem-solving and collaboration with people from diverse backgrounds, develops not only technical skills but also fosters personal growth. As I tackled my first programming challenges during the Piscine, I could literally feel new neural connections forming in my brain."

Isabella Torres-Revelo, AI Biomedical Engineer and PhD student at the University of Bern

"While studying fashion design, I drifted into the IT field and have been working in the industry ever since as a career changer—from support to project management, with many certifications but no official degree. At 42, I can quickly and independently make up for this without being tied to a fixed school schedule for years: a flexibility I need as a former digital nomad and autodidact with a multifaceted life."

Salma Alaoui, Projektmanager in agile IT projects

„ Our family has relocated frequently; most recently, I attended school in Norway. Instead of completing a 10th grade or going to a secondary school, I'm now joining 42 Zurich. This different way of learning really appeals to me."

Maximilian, youngest participant at the first Piscine

About 42 Zürich

42 Zürich is the new German-speaking Swiss campus of 42 Switzerland and part of the international 42 Network. The nonprofit campus offers adults aged 18 and older a tuition-free, project-based technology education program without requiring formal academic qualifications. Students learn through real-world projects, collaboration with peers, gamification, and self-directed progression. 42 Zürich aims to create new pathways into technology careers, strengthen Switzerland's local talent base, and advance diversity and inclusion across the technology sector.

Media

Contact

Cristina Bucher · CEO 42 Zürich

presse@42zurich.ch

Leutschenbachstrasse 95, 8052 Zürich

Pictures

Logo: [42 Zürich Logos](#)

Photos: [42 Zürich Fotos](#)

Online and Social Media

42zurich.ch/en/media · [LinkedIn](#) · [Instagram](#) ·

[YouTube](#) · [Facebook](#)