Education	PhD	Previous jobs	Current job	Products	Self-improvement
Biochemistry	Microbiology & Immunology	research and development	Medical Science Liaison (MSL)	MP*	
ETH		Biotech Company	Pharmaceutical company		

*MP = Medicinal Product

Male
Dr. sc. ETH (Biochemistry),
Medical Science Liaison (MSL)

How did you get your position (previous education, internships, experiences)?
I studied Biochemistry at ETH and continued with a PhD in Microbiology and Immunology. Afterwards, I worked for about 1 1/2 years in research and development of a Biotech Company. Having spent so many years at the bench, I was curious about gaining experience at the other side of the drug development chain. In particular, I was interested in seeing the impact of a new therapy on patients' lives. My current job is in a young pharmaceutical company that was willing to hire a scientist without any pharma experience. Knowing a team member certainly helped to get in touch with the hiring manager.

Describe how a typical working day looks like
The main task of an MSL is certainly to build and maintain relationships with Key opinion leader (KOL) and act as medical expert to customers (Health care professionals; HCPs). This requires identifying though leaders and meeting physicians at Hospitals / Clinics and informing them about new therapies as well as initiate scientific discussions. In addition, you support key account managers in regard to medical and scientific issues, which includes accompanying them to visits. As a MSL it is important to know all the relevant clinical studies, therefore you need to spend quite some time reading and discussing the literature. Another important task includes the organization and sponsoring of congresses, symposia, roundtables and advisory boards.

What do you like/dislike about your work?
As a MSL you are in touch with physicians and therefore see the direct impact of newly developed therapies on patients' live. Furthermore, I appreciate the scientific interactions with my customers as well as the freedom to plan my day on my own.
As you are field- and home-office based, you spend a lot of time on your own and it's more difficult to build a relationship with your colleagues.

What do you advice students starting their professional career?
Graduating from University, it is hard to envisage what it is like to work in pharma industry. Hence, I recommend being open and trying to get a foot into the door. Once you have a few years of experience, there are many directions in which you can develop.

Education	PhD	Previous jobs			Current job	Products	Self-improvement
Biology	Biology & Immunology medical faculty	project manager	scientific support manage	account manager	Senior Project Manager Clinical Operations 2018	MP, MD	Master of Public health
	Geneva				Non-profit organisation		

*MP = Medicinal Product, MD= Medical device

Female
PhD in sciences, Master in Public Health (Health Systems management stream)
Senior Project Manager Clinical Operations

How did you get your position (previous education, internships, experiences)?
I think I was lucky! I used to work several years in research whilst doing my PhD in sciences at the medical faculty. I changed then however to industry and worked for different companies in England and Switzerland. This provided me with insights in different multicultural work settings as well as company structures. I have been working closely with distributors in India for example as well as with big pharma companies. I worked in positions as project manager, scientific support as well as account manager. Due to my personal interest I started studies in public health parallel to my work. I think the combination of research and customer orientation together with the Master of Public Health was a good fit for this role where as a project manager one has to consolidate different opinions.

Describe how a typical working day looks like
My days mostly are in the office, combined with web-meetings or face-to-face meetings. Sometimes I travel for reporting to the funding bodies or for site visits. I am responsible for the oversight of about 30 studies and their reporting to the funding bodies. For about 7 studies I am directly also responsible for their project management. So my office routine is dominated by emails, excel sheets and text documents. As in all clinical operations, we adhere to standard operating procedures and have many templates which do help us to be more efficient.

What do you like/dislike about your work?
As a project manager you are involved in most of the aspects of the clinical study – this comes with the less pleasant parts of being in the middle of different opinions. However it also comes with the pleasant part to understand the different inputs for the development of a study.
The thing I like most about my work is the contact with the surgeons. They are committed to improving health care and it is a pleasure to be able to support them in their visions. I do also appreciate the diversity very much we do have in our team – from the data manager to the clinical research associates, from the medical affairs to the study assistants – I enjoy working with all of them, as all bring a slightly different view to the whole picture.

What do you advice students starting their professional career?
Everybody makes errors. Do however not let errors paralyze you – learn and keep going with a smile! Especially in the professional environment there will be people being unhappy about something you did – would you have done it differently, someone else would be unhappy. Realize that this is normal and that you need to look ahead and not worry too much about this.

Education	PhD	Previous jobs	Current job	Products (MP or MD)*	Self-improvement
Nurse		Study coordinator	Clinical research Associate (CRA)	MP	Master of Science in Clinical Research
		Hospital	Industry on behalf of CRO		

*MP = Medicinal Product, MD= Medical device

Female
Master of Science in Clinical Research
Senior CRA

How did you get your position (previous education, internships, experiences)?

I was working as a study coordinator at the University Hospital Zurich for 11 years and did my Master's degree in between. When I recognized, that there is no career track for my position I decided to search for new opportunities in the pharmaceutical industry. Due to lack of experience in monitoring of clinical trials it was not easy to find a job as a clinical research associate (CRA). Finally, I contacted a recruitment specialist with an exciting portfolio of clients. The specialist was very helpful to prepare job interviews and updating my CV. In Oct. 2016 I started with an international contract research organization (CRO) working as a CRA for a big pharmaceutical company.

Describe how a typical working day looks like

I am responsible for the monitoring of clinical trials and the tracking of study progress, thereby contributing to the overall management of clinical trials in accordance with the appropriate quality standards including ICH-GCP guidelines, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), applicable regulations, rules and guidance. I am responsible for clinical site initiation maintenance, and closure activities, including maintenance of study documents. I prepare and submit essential document packages required for clinical site initiation. I collect and review essential documents received from clinical sites to ensure all required documents are obtained, accurate and complete. I review Patient Information Sheet /Informed Consent Forms (PIS/ICFs) and/or data protection authorizations as required. I perform on-site monitoring activities of clinical studies and escalate major site issues to the Clinical Trial Manager (CTM)/Project Manager (PM); documents activities in monitoring reports and follow-up correspondence. Site visits and associated tasks are completed with oversight until authorized to be performed independently.

What do you like/dislike about your work?

I like to work independently and I like to collaborate with the different sites, support and teach them in clinical study relevant tasks.
I dislike working every day alone in the home-office without personally contacts to colleagues.

What do you advice students starting their professional career?

Start in a well-organized company, which will provide you sufficient support in the first month and a career track.

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Education	PhD	Previous jobs	Current job	Products (MP or MD)*	Self-improvement
Pharmacist	**Dr. rer. nat.**	**Technical Project leader**	**Head of Technical Operations**	**MP**	Finance, Leadership at IMD
University	**Pharmac. technology**	**Pilot Plant Manager Solid dosage forms**	**Industry**		

MP = Medicinal Product, MD= Medical device

Male
Pharmacist
Head of Technical Operations, responsible for the global supply chain of orphan drugs

How did you get your position (previous education, internships, experiences)?
I started as a trainee in the Production and Development function of an international pharma company.

Describe how a typical working day looks like
Meetings, phone calls, and e-mails are covering the most part of the daily working time.

What do you like/dislike about your work?
I like the diversity of tasks, the variety of issues to deal with and the work for a purpose, i.e., to bring effective medicines to sick people world-wide.

What do you advice students starting their professional career?
Take care to have a high quality education.

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Education	PhD	Previous jobs		Current job	Products	Self-improvement
Pharmacy	Biochemistry	Teaching Galenics & Science of pharmaceuticals	Regulatory affairs	CEO	MP/ MD	Courses regarding personal skills
University	Research center	School	SME and CH affiliates	Healthcare consultancy		Teaching RA

Female, PhD
Regulatory Affairs Manager

How did you get your position (previous education, internships, experience)?
After a period of teaching, I transferred to the pharmaceutical industry. My first company was a family business. At that time a new job profile was being established so I was given the chance to open a regulatory affairs department. After bringing up my family I got the opportunity to work as a Free Lancer in another company with the same responsibilities, to build up a department for regulatory affairs. After the children had grown up I was able to take on further employment. Working in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) the regulatory affairs job was always connected to other functions such as Pharmacovigilance, Qualified Person or Medical writing. After reaching retirement age, I founded a consultancy.

What do you like/dislike about your work?
A substantial part of Regulatory Affairs is to be well informed about the current regulatory and scientific framework concerning your products. Therefore it is necessary to follow the corresponding daily news, assess them on relevance and communicate the results to your colleagues. The main task is to prepare submissions, licence variations or renewal approvals and to monitor deadlines. Work is very varied, depending on the type of company. The responsibilities can range from helvetising the documentation sent by the head quarter to the CH affiliate to writing dossiers and preparing labelings in your team.

What do you like/dislike about your work?
If you decide to be Regulatory Affairs Manager you have obviously decided to work daily in an office. You can work part time and some companies allow you to work from home.
As Regulatory Affairs Manager you are in contact with most departments of the company. This makes the work very varied and interesting. You are the interface between competent authority and the management of the company and play a certain role in strategic decisions. However, the Regulatory Affairs department remains a service department.

What advice would you give to students starting out on their professional career?
Do not focus on one job area. Be open for current job offers, the field is big and with digitalization, globalisation and ever-changing requirements in the segment of marketing, the authorization of new jobs is becoming established. There are a lot of job offers which could be interesting. Having some years of experience in the pharmaceutical world you can better orientate yourself in the jungle of possibilities and you will be better able to judge which pathways to choose or not to go down.

You come from another country?
For most companies in Switzerland, French or German is a requirement, especially considering the need to read and understand national regulations. In addition a lot of training courses and networking events are held in German.
For a few administrative issues it may be necessary that you need your education to be recognised and accepted in Switzerland. In case you need it - take your time to get your main education certificates approved as far as possible.

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Education	PhD	Previous jobs	Current job	Products (MP or MD)*	Self-improvement
Pharmacy/MIPS		Technical Research and Development	Regulatory Affairs Manager	MP	CAS Project Management
ETH		Big Pharma	Biotech company		

*MP = Medicinal Product, MD= Medical device

Male
MSc Medicinal and Industrial Pharmaceutical Sciences
Regulatory Affairs Manager

How did you get your position (previous education, internships, experiences)?

After finishing my BSc in Pharmacy at ETH Zurich I took the decision to focus on a career in the pharmaceutical industry and against the possibility to work in a public pharmacy. Therefore I have applied for the MSc in Medicinal and Industrial Pharmaceutical Sciences*. The big advantage of this specialised program was that many of the lecturers are working in pharmaceutical companies. This has allowed us to build a good network. By using this, I could do my Master Thesis in R&D at Novartis in Basel. After my thesis, I decided to look for an office based job which is close to science but where no PhD is required. After some interesting discussions with experienced people I knew that I want to work in the field of Regulatory Affairs. I got the chance to start in the Swiss affiliate of an international pharmaceutical company and will soon relocate to take a position at their headquarters.

* today MSc Pharmaceutical Science

Describe how a typical working day looks like

Working as a Regulatory Affairs Manager in a local affiliate of a big company means to be responsible for the marketing approval of the company's products in Switzerland. Therefore we are working closely with the company's headquarter and the local health authorities in order to get new drugs on the market or maintain approvals with lifecycle management for launched products. It is true that working in RA includes creation of many documents and forms in order to compile submissions. However, in RA we are an interface between many departments like medical, marketing, safety, logistics, quality and sales which means a lot of interactions and interdisciplinary scientific discussions. Furthermore we are always the first department to get to know new data of products and therapies.

What do you like/dislike about your work?

I like the various interdisciplinary discussions, the negotiations with health authorities and the project management aspects while working in RA. On the other side it is sometimes a challenge to manage the large number of various projects at the same time without missing anything (organisational skills are key!).

What do you advice students starting their professional career?

After University it's not easy to decide where you want to go. Therefore I recommend to talk with experienced people and to use your network to get a foot into the door. An internship is always a good idea to get a first impression of a specific field. A further great opportunity is to join graduate programs of bigger pharmaceutical companies - especially if you would like to work in the field of Regulatory Affairs.

Education	PhD	Previous jobs		Current job	Products (MP or MD)*	Self-improvement
Integrative Biology	Pharmaceutical Sciences	Medical advisor	Regulatory Consultant	Scientific officer	MP, MD	Diploma of Advanced Studies in Pharmaceutical Medicine (ECPM)
ETH	ETH	Big Pharma	Int. Reg. Consulting Company	Federal Office		

MP = Medicinal Product, MD= Medical device

Male
Dr. Sc. ETH (Pharmaceutical Sciences)
Scientific Officer at a Swiss Federal Office

How did you get your position (previous education, internships, experiences)?

I always wanted to work in the pharmaceutical field, so I chose the topics of my master study in biology accordingly (pharmacology, immunology, toxicology, etc.). After my masters in biology, I worked as a trainee abroad in clinical research in a big pharma company and I really liked the environment but still wanted to do a PhD. So I went back to academia to do my PhD in pharmaceutical sciences and after that again joined the industry. There, I gathered experience in different fields as a medical advisor and regulatory consultant, working office-based and in the field, for small and big companies. Currently, I work at a Swiss Federal Office, managing different projects where we look at the effectiveness of the legal framework regulating health research.

Describe how a typical working day looks like

I am mostly at the office, to organise, plan and track the health legislation effectiveness research, transparency initiatives and to contribute to the development of new laws in the area of medicinal products and devices. So I do a lot of reading, writing and planning as well as holding meetings with a lot of different stakeholders from academia, industry and other federal authorities.

What do you like/dislike about your work?

Being able to contribute to the future regulations in the pharmaceutical sector gives you a whole new perspective to the government and the process of lawmaking. Suddenly, you understand that the government is not just the government but many individuals with different visions and ideas on how to improve the regulation in the health sector. Also, you see that in the end, the parliament, and therefore the people that you and I voted for, are the ones that need to approve a new law. You are in the middle of our democratic system.

What do you advice students starting their professional career?

Trust your feeling. If you were to accept a job offer, accept it on the grounds of personal connection you felt with your future boss and colleagues. Don't just take the first offer if you didn't feel comfortable with your interviewer. You'll spend a lot of time with them and you need to get along with them well. Always speak with them personally (don't just do telephone interviews) and insist on meeting your future colleagues during the recruitment phase.
After some years, try to see other fields too to find something that truly fits your personal interests.

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