Zurich, 9 June 2026

A decade of Swiss job advertisements reveals how gender gaps in digital skills demand have evolved over time and still persist, at a moment when generative AI technologies may be reshaping demand for digital work.

The Demand for Digital Skills: Gender Gaps Across Occupations and Management Roles

Zurich, 9 June 2026 – A new whitepaper by the University of Zurich, co-published with Advance and supported by the Canton of Zurich, documents a persistent gender gap in digital skills demand across the Swiss labor market, with significant implications for women's access to managerial roles. Drawing on more than one million Swiss job advertisements from 2015 to 2025, analyzed using large language models, the study provides the most comprehensive analysis of digital skills demand in the Swiss labor market to date.

The good news: the gender gap in digital skills demand is narrowing
Over the past decade, the gender gap in digital skills demand across occupations with unequal shares of female and male workers has narrowed by approximately 34% over the past decade. This convergence reflects two parallel developments: more women are entering jobs with higher digital skills requirements, and occupations with larger shares of women are themselves becoming more digitally intensive. The trajectory is encouraging.

The structural challenge: the gap is widest for the most complex digital skills, and these are increasingly demanded in management
The narrowing of the gap, however, is not uniform and widens as the complexity of digital skills increases. At medium and advanced levels, the gap is widest. This matters because demand for digital skills in managerial roles has risen by 55% over the past decade, with the most pronounced increases at the medium and advanced levels, precisely where the gap between women and men is largest. Over the same period, women's share of management roles grew only slightly, from 33.3% to 37%.

The gap is not solely a matter of individual preferences. As evidence shows, structural barriers operating before and after labor market entry limit women's opportunities to develop digital skills. Lower exposure leads to lower digital proficiency, which in turn restricts access to more demanding positions.

The role of AI: a risk to the progress made?
Analyses show that job postings are relatively declining in occupations most exposed to generative AI technologies. At the same time, these occupations tend to be disproportionately digitally intensive. Taken together, these findings point to a clear risk: access to digitally intensive occupations may become more constrained, potentially reversing some of the progress achieved over the past decade. Managerial occupations are not exempted from this dynamic, exhibiting moderate AI exposure and a slight decline in

job advertisements. However, these trends are not predetermined. Whether AI technologies ultimately reinforce or reduce existing gender inequalities will also depend on the choices made by employers, educators, and policymakers to support women's access to digitally more intensive occupations.

From data to action
Further closing the digital skills gender gap in managerial positions requires coordinated action across multiple levels. The whitepaper puts forward the following recommendations:

- **Audit and assess:** Map the distribution of digital skills within managerial positions and examine whether AI adoption is increasing digital demands in roles where women are well represented versus underrepresented.
- **Invest in upskilling and education:** Provide continuous training opportunities in digital skills within organizations and strengthen pathways into advanced digital skills for female talent, ensuring exposure beyond basic digital literacy through to more complex competencies.
- **Remove structural barriers:** Digital skills development depends not only on training. Broader public policies and social norms shaping the division of care and paid work within families affect who can stay in careers where digital skills are developed and strengthened over time.
- **Build individual opportunity:** Seek exposure to advanced digital tasks within current roles, leverage networks and mentoring, and make career decisions based on individual interests and strengths.

Quotes
"The evidence presented in this whitepaper tells a coherent story. Across the Swiss labor market, women are systematically concentrated in occupations where digital skills are demanded less frequently, in smaller quantities, and at lower levels of complexity. While the encouraging news is that this gap has narrowed over the past decade, it remains persistent at the advanced level. The tools are available, the time to act is now."
Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. Marlis Buchmann, Head of the Swiss Job Market Monitor, University of Zurich

"Switzerland's prosperity depends on putting all of its talent to work. This research makes clear that the digital skills gap does not reflect a difference in capability. It is the result of structural conditions that employers, educators, the public sector, and individuals have the power to change. Addressing it is not only a matter of fairness; it is essential to safeguarding Switzerland's competitiveness in the decade ahead."
Samuel Mösle, Co-Head, Division of Business and Economic Development, Canton of Zurich

"Digital skills have become an increasingly important component of managerial work in Switzerland, and the data shows that structural barriers, not differences in potential, are limiting women's access to them. The gap has narrowed over the past decade, which shows that change is possible. The question now is whether we act with sufficient deliberateness to accelerate that progress." **Alkistis Petropaki, General Manager, Advance**

Full study
The whitepaper is available for download here.

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About Advance
Advance is Switzerland's leading business association for gender equality; a network of 150 Swiss-based companies committed to increasing the share of women in management. It is proven that gender-mixed teams make better decisions, are more innovative, and tend to be more profitable. With a concrete program, Advance supports companies to turn diversity into a competitive advantage. Advance has set the goal of achieving a minimum of 30% women across all management levels in member companies by 2030.

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A current overview of all Advance members can be found at: weadvance.ch/membership/#members

About the Swiss Job Market Monitor (SJMM), University of Zurich
The Swiss Job Market Monitor at the University of Zurich advances scientific understanding of the Swiss labor market and its long-term development. Through the collection of representative and time-comparable data from job advertisements, it systematically monitors evolving dynamics in the labor market. The resulting data and analytical insights are shared with academic audiences, public administrations, policymakers, and the wider public. The Swiss Job Market Monitor is affiliated with the Institute of Sociology at the University of Zurich and headed by Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. Marlis Buchmann.

About Kanton Zürich Standortförderung
The Division of Business and Economic Development supports resident companies, promotes Zurich's innovation capacity by connecting relevant stakeholders in key industries, fosters external economic relations, and offers guidance to companies interested in moving to Zurich.