



PhD opportunity in Business Administration

Fully funded and including employment as a research associate

With a focus on leader self-disclosure of flaws



The Department of Business Administration at the University of Zurich is inviting applications for a PhD position in the context of a Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) funded project entitled “Flaw Free or Be Me at Work? Exploring the Intersection of Diversity and Disclosure in Leadership.” The project is supervised by Prof. Dr. Lauren Howe and offers the opportunity to join the research team in the Center for Leadership in the Future of Work, led by Prof. Dr. Jochen Menges, thus providing a supportive and interactive environment for PhD studies.

1 Your Tasks

Your primary tasks are...

- to conduct research and publish in top-tier journals in areas of organizational behavior and/or human resource management, with a special focus on leader self-disclosure of flaws at work (see the project description below)
- to assist with the development and delivery of organizational behavior, human resource management and/or general management courses, for undergraduate, graduate and/or executive participants
- to provide supervision for undergraduate and graduate students
- as part of the team in the Center for Leadership in the Future of Work, to contribute to the center, particularly with regard to science communication efforts in the Center, as a leading platform for rigorous research, forward-looking teaching, effective outreach, and organizational and societal impact

2 Your Qualifications

Your qualifications include...

- an enthusiasm for the topic of leadership and an interest in disclosure of flaws at work
- an excellent Masters degree or its equivalent in Business or Psychology or neighboring fields, including successfully completed courses in organizational behavior or organizational/industrial psychology or social psychology
- excellent oral and written English, as evidenced, for non-native speakers, in relevant test scores (e.g., TOEFL), stays abroad and/or a Masters thesis written in English; German language skills are not needed (taking German classes is an option for those who want to)
- a very good understanding of quantitative methods, including study design and statistical analyses, and a very good command of relevant software packages, such as R, Mplus, Stata, and/or SPSS
- experience with qualitative/mixed methods, or curiosity and enthusiasm for learning about these methods, is a plus
- good technical skills, including a very good command of Microsoft office software; anycoding skills are a plus
- a strong interest in research and, ideally, some relevant experience, for example, as a research assistant during your previous studies
- a collaborative spirit and energy for working in a team, as well as curiosity, self-reliance, and initiative-taking
- an interest in science communication, with a focus on research that has practical impact

3 Your Opportunity

You have the opportunity...

- to complete a PhD at an internationally renowned research university, with full funding and including employment as a research associate for four years at an internationally competitive salary level, in line with the university's compensation scheme
- to work with leading scholars through collaborative research projects on an issue of societal relevance
- to be part of a dynamic team that is dedicated to top-tier research, inspirational teaching and impactful outreach while fostering a positive working atmosphere
- to partake in extensive career development; that includes, for example, frequent and intense mentoring, regular feedback, relevant courses, extensive networking opportunities, support for workshops and conferences
- to develop a broad skill set by gaining teaching/training and consulting experience, and to expand your professional network through contacts to some of the world's most renowned businesses that belong to the center's network both locally in Zurich and globally
- to live in a city where the quality of life is among the best in the world



4 The Focus of Your PhD Studies

Today, leaders are encouraged to be open about their personal flaws (i.e., negative personal characteristics) at work. For example, an award-winning Harvard Business Review article advises business leaders to “show us who they are—warts and all,” like admitting being irritable, disorganized, or shy. Supporting this idea, self-disclosure theory has long suggested that revealing aspects of one's self to others builds stronger connections with them. Similarly, the literature on authenticity suggests that leaders who are more

open and transparent are more effective. These examples from science and practice all suggest that leaders who let their guard down and openly show their more negative sides can be more successful.

However, this optimistic view takes a one-size-fits-all approach that neglects aspects of human diversity, including leader attributes like gender, age, and race. This research project thus examines how leader diversity influences self-disclosure of flaws in the workplace. For members of social groups that are already underrepresented in leadership positions and face stereotypes in leadership (e.g., women), being open about certain personal flaws could present a risk for leaders rather than an advantage (e.g., constituting a social norm violation that prompts backlash).

The proposed research has meaningful societal implications as leadership is becoming more diverse and more personal. The insights from this research inform dialogues among practitioners and the public that, right now, reinforce the notion that leaders should be their true selves at work. Results will help to unpack whether openly disclosing personal flaws at work is a privilege that only some leaders may enjoy. Already, women and other underrepresented groups are disadvantaged when it comes to the pursuit of leadership positions. Trends that encourage leaders to be open about personal flaws may risk exacerbating these differences—or alternatively, may hold promise in ameliorating them.

5 About Us

The University of Zurich is one of the leading research universities in Europe and enjoys an excellent international reputation. With scholars and students from all over the world, the Faculty of Business, Economics and Information Technology engages with the important economic and social questions of our times and addresses them through cutting-edge research. The Department of Business Administration, specifically, focuses on organizations.

The Center for Leadership in the Future of Work was established with the support of some of the world's most renowned businesses that provide both funding and access to data, with the goal of growing a vibrant global people innovation ecosystem that prepares people and organizations for the future of work. We give aspiring researchers an opportunity to grow their careers in a collaborative setting with an international outlook, and we foster a startup spirit that allows all members of the Center to shape and contribute to the Center's goal of developing a leading platform for rigorous research, inspirational teaching, effective outreach, and organizational and societal impact.



6 About Zurich

Located in the heart of Europe, Zurich is an important economic, cultural, and social center. The image of the largest city in Switzerland is dominated by its beautiful location on Lake Zurich and the Limmat River, its stunning views of the Alps on the horizon, numerous local recreation areas, and urban diversity. Around 440,000 people from more than 175 different countries live in Zurich. Zurich offers something for everyone: culinary flights of fancy, limitless shopping, numerous cultural and sporting events, Switzerland's trendiest nightlife, over 50 museums and 100 galleries, to mention only a few – plus the amazing outdoors of Switzerland with world-class skiing slopes, hiking trails, and watersports opportunities are just steps away and often accessible with public transport.



7 Timeline and How to Apply

Step 1: Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until the position is filled, with a first review of applications on **7 September 2026**. Please apply by this date to ensure priority consideration of your application. Please submit your application in English via e-mail to recruiting.clfw@business.uzh.ch, indicating "Application for PhD Opportunity in Flaws and Leadership" in the header of your e-mail. Your application should consist of two PDF documents:

First, please put the following documents in this order into a single PDF document:

- A 2-page cover letter that describes your motivation and includes your contact data
- A current CV that includes any research-relevant experiences (assistantships, internships, lab experience, conference presentations, publications, etc.)
- Copies of your final transcripts for high school and all university degrees
- Optionally, any transcripts for tests scores (e.g., TOEFL, SAT, ACT, GRE, GMAT)
- Names and contact data including e-mail and phone number for two referees who can speak to your research abilities and potential in academia.

Second, please submit a copy of your Masters thesis as a separate PDF document. If you did more than one Masters degree, please submit your latest thesis.

Step 2: If we see a good fit between your profile and our offer, we will invite you for a Zoom interview and afterwards may follow up with online Assessment Center. A first round of Zoom interviews and Assessment Centers are conducted in **mid September 2026**.

Step 3: To get to know each other, we invite successful candidates to Zurich for further interviews. A first round of interviews in Zurich are scheduled for **1 and 2 October 2026**. Please block these dates in your calendar.

Step 4: The potential start date for the position is **1 January 2027**. Earlier start dates are also possible. Please let us know in your cover letter by when you would be free to join us and when your desired start date is.

If you do not hear from us until **31 December 2026**, please understand that we cannot take your application forward.

Any questions?

If you have questions about the application process or your fit with the position, you may contact us at recruiting.clfw@business.uzh.ch. Given the volume of applications, individual responses may take some time. Thank you for your patience.

We look forward to receiving your application!





**University of
Zurich** UZH

Center for Leadership in the
Future of Work

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