

The joy of giving back



© ETH Foundation / Hannes Heinzer 14 September 2021

From scholarship recipient to donor and champion of young talent: more and more Excellence Scholars are becoming supporters of the programme themselves shortly after completing their studies, perpetuating the encouragement they received. We present a few of those former Excellence Scholars here.

Andrei Poenaru

Romania, Computer Science

Since receiving the Excellence Scholarship in 2015 and earning my Master's degree I have been working for Google in Zurich, currently as a Senior Software Engineer.

What I would still like to achieve is to realise my entrepreneurial ambitions.

I donate to the programme because ETH and the scholarship represented a terrific opportunity for me and I would like to see others receive that potentially life-changing chance as well.



Fabio Widmer

Switzerland, Mechanical Engineering

Since receiving the Excellence Scholarship in 2015 and earning my Master's degree I have gone on to become a doctoral student at the Institute for Dynamic Systems and Control at ETH and am aiming to develop intelligent thermal energy management software for a prototype trolleybus.

I donate to the programme because I would like to enable others to enjoy the experiences I had. The community of scholarship students was unbelievably valuable to me



Denitsa Baykusheva

Bulgaria, Chemistry

Since receiving the Excellence Scholarship in 2012 and earning my Master's degree I have completed a doctorate in the Laboratory of Physical Chemistry at ETH. I'm currently a postdoc in the Department of Physics at the University of Harvard.

I donate to the programme because I was only able to study at ETH because of the scholarship. My time at ETH moulded me as a scientist and as a person. Today I'm a donor myself because I want to take the opportunity to give something back to ETH.



Redona Hafizi

Albania, Medicinal and Industrial Pharmaceutical Sciences

Since receiving the Excellence Scholarship in 2016 and earning my Master's degree I've been studying for a doctorate in pharmacology at the University of Bern.

What I would still like to achieve is to work in the pharmaceutical industry, at the interface between science and management.

I donate to the programme because ETH gave me so much: a great environment in a new country and insight and experiences that are simply priceless. I'll never be able to repay the debt I owe my alma mater.



Mauro Salazar

Switzerland, Mechanical Engineering

Since receiving the Excellence Scholarship in 2012 and earning my Master's degree I have completed a doctorate at ETH and spent a year as a postdoc in the Autonomous Systems Lab at Stanford University. In April 2020 I was appointed assistant professor at Eindhoven University of Technology.

What I would still like to achieve is to contribute to a zero-emissions society through my research into intelligent mobility systems. On the teaching side, I not only want to pass on "state-of-the-art" knowledge to prospective engineers but teach them about human values too.

I donate to the programme because I am aware how important it is for ETH to attract and support talented and creative students.



Tamara Eicher

Switzerland, Pharmaceutical Sciences

Since receiving the Excellence Scholarship in 2014 and earning my Master's degree I have worked in a pharmacy. Today I am employed as a scientific officer for sterile production in the Cantonal Pharmacy in Zurich.

What I would still like to achieve is a leading position in the pharmaceutical industry

I donate to the programme because I was very glad for the support during my own studies. Because I completed my education at a later age, I had to cover my own living expenses.



<https://ethz-foundation.ch/en/spotlight/news-2021-esop-wb-joy/>

PDF exported on 05/09/2025 23:19

© 2025 ETH Zurich Foundation