

## Ways to a Job and Education in Switzerland

Information for adults living in Switzerland

Did you have your schooling and further education abroad and are you now looking for work in Switzerland? Or would you like some additional training in Switzerland? Then you will find some important information for you in this leaflet, which should help you with the first steps towards a job or the possibility of further education.

### „Parlez-vous français?“ „Sprechen Sie Deutsch?“ „Parla italiano?“

Whether you are looking for a job or would like some further education, one of the most important requirements is knowledge of the local national language<sup>1</sup>. If you live in a German-speaking area, start with High German! That way you will have a good basis for understanding Swiss German later – or even speaking it.

For a temporary job, it might be sufficient to understand the relevant language and speak a little of it. However, even for temporary work, the ability to read and write a little are increasingly expected and for more demanding jobs, you should definitely have a much better language knowledge. For further education or studying at a university or college, you must be able to read and understand complicated texts and be able to write texts on your own. Depending on your aim, therefore, you need to be capable of various degrees of skill. For this reason it is important for you to find out which language standard is necessary for you to achieve your goal.

Furthermore, language is not only important for a job or further education in Switzerland. Language knowledge is also very useful in other real-life situations, for example when talking to neighbours, shopping, talk about your children with teachers, talking to a doctor, filling out forms, getting in contact with government offices and authorities etc. Then, if in the future you would like to (or have to) find another job you will already have taken the first important step!

A summary of language courses can be found in the Internet.<sup>2</sup> Additional information in connection with language courses can also be obtained from the career counselling centre. Information regarding the career counselling centre can be found on the last page of this leaflet.

### Tips for Job-Hunting

When looking for a job, not only your language skills play an important role, but also what kind of education, how much job experience or what kind of permit you possess. However, depending on the economic situation, it can be very difficult to find a job in Switzerland, particularly if you have never worked in Switzerland before. You should therefore use every opportunity to obtain work experience in Switzerland, for example through practical work, or a job for which you might perhaps be overqualified. Possibly you can change to a better job in the same firm later, or thanks to the practical work, you might be given a good reference with which you would have a better chance with your job applications later! Voluntary work can also be a good opportunity to gain work experience and to get to know people who perhaps could help you with future job-hunting.

Tell your relatives, friends and acquaintances that you are looking for a job. By chance, perhaps there is a job vacancy in one of their firms? Or these friends know someone who knows of a job vacancy?

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<sup>1</sup> Switzerland has four national languages: German, French, Italian and Romansch

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Language courses in the internet:	Deutsch	<a href="http://www.berufsberatung.ch/weiterbildung">www.berufsberatung.ch/weiterbildung</a>
	Français	<a href="http://www.orientation.ch/perfectionnement">www.orientation.ch/perfectionnement</a>
	Italiano	<a href="http://www.orientamento.ch/perfezionamento">www.orientamento.ch/perfezionamento</a>

You can find a job thanks to advertisements in a newspaper, in the internet or by contacting a business directly. Furthermore, the Regional Job Centre<sup>3</sup> can also help you to look for a job.

### Acknowledgement of Foreign Diplomas

Did you have any further education resulting in a diploma or certificate in your country of origin? You can have it verified so that you know what level it holds within the Swiss education system. If it is a diploma in a regulated professional activity, then it has to be recognized as equivalent when you want to work in this profession. For qualifications in unregulated professional activities, the Federal Government Information Office recommends level certificates, as you do not need a recognition of your foreign qualifications to work in Switzerland. However, it is up to the job market and to employers only, whether a job candidate with or without equivalent education is taken into consideration or not. A level certificate of the OPET is very useful for public authorities, education institutions and potential employers as it provides information about the level of the foreign qualification within the Swiss education system. Again, recognition certificates or level certificates do not guarantee that you find a job in your profession, especially if you do not have yet experience in Switzerland. Nevertheless, such certificates are an important step. Maybe you can also do continuing training in order to obtain a Swiss diploma in your profession.

Get in touch with the Federal Government Information Office<sup>4</sup> Here you will learn how to proceed.

### Paths to a Profession or University Education in Switzerland

In Switzerland the way to a particular profession can be quite different to that in your country of origin. Here, only a small proportion of professions require a high school followed by university education. Most young Swiss learn their profession following obligatory schooling by an apprenticeship, which is now known as basic professional training. They study for 3-4 years. The training is both practical and theoretical. There are about 250 professions in Switzerland which one can learn after obligatory schooling. For these professions there are many good courses and further education. Only a few young people go on to high school or university. How does one study for a profession in Switzerland? Find it out. In that way you will discover what possibilities you have if you wish to continue to study or train and in which field you can look for a job.

The brochure „Was nach der Schule?“ provides a good summary of the educational system in Switzerland. The booklet is available in many different languages and can usually be found in your career counselling centre.

### Completion of Professional Training for Adults

There are various possibilities for adults to complete their professional training. Information can be obtained from the career counselling centre.

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German-speaking Switzerland: Regionales Arbeitsvermittlungszentrum (RAV); [www.treffpunkt-arbeit.ch](http://www.treffpunkt-arbeit.ch)  
French-speaking Switzerland: Office régional de placement (ORP); [www.espace-emploi.ch](http://www.espace-emploi.ch)  
Italian-speaking Switzerland: Ufficio regionale di collocamento (URC); [www.area-lavoro.ch](http://www.area-lavoro.ch)

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[www.bbt.admin.ch](http://www.bbt.admin.ch) >English >Recognition of foreign qualifications  
>Deutsch >Anerkennung ausländischer Diplome  
>Français >Reconnaissance de diplômes étrangers  
>Italiano >Riconoscimento dei diplomi esteri

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Englisch	Wege zu Arbeit und Bildung in der Schweiz	<a href="http://www.berufsberatung.ch/migration">www.berufsberatung.ch/migration</a>
Anglais	Premiers pas vers le monde du travail et de la formation en Suisse	<a href="http://www.orientation.ch/migration">www.orientation.ch/migration</a>
Inglese	Il sistema del mondo del lavoro e della formazione in Svizzera	<a href="http://www.orientamento.ch/migrazione">www.orientamento.ch/migrazione</a>

### Financing University or other kinds of Further Education

If you are interested in some kind of further education or a university course, you should also consider the financial aspects! Most students in Switzerland are supported by their parents or they work in addition to their studies in order to finance their further education or university course themselves. It is only under very particular circumstances that educational grants are available<sup>5</sup>.

### Various Opportunities provided by the Career Counselling Centre<sup>6</sup>

You should visit the career counselling centre if you wish to find out about the possible ways to further education or think about your professional future in Switzerland thoroughly.

At this centre you will find information on all kinds of further education and professions. The career counselling centres have an Infothek at their disposal. The Infothek functions like a library. You can go there during opening hours without an appointment, find out about various professions or further education and, as a rule, borrow relevant material. At the Infothek there are many other leaflets and data on all kinds of subjects as well as addresses of advisory bureaux in your area. This data is in the local national language. Very little information is translated into other languages!

If you cannot get any further on your own in the Infothek, you can register for a personal interview in which you can discuss your situation with one of the professionals (register in the Infothek or by telephone). This discussion takes place in the local national language (other languages on request). The career counselling centre does not handle job vacancies, but you can discuss career possibilities or look for new ideas with a professional. With the help of the adviser you can plan your way for a suitable job or further education.

Access to work and education in Switzerland requires a lot of patience and tenacity from you!

On this way, we wish you all the best and every success.

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Additional information about educational grants are available in career counselling centres or in the internet:

In German-speaking Switzerland	berufsberatung.ch >Laufbahn >Tipps für die Laufbahnplanung >Finanzierung der Weiterbildung
In French-speaking Switzerland	orientation.ch >Formation >Financer sa formation
In Italian-speaking Switzerland	orientamento.ch >Formazioni >Finanzare la propria formazione

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Each canton has at least one career counselling centre.

Addresses are obtainable from your school, your commune or in the internet:

Deutsch: [www.adressen.sdbb.ch](http://www.adressen.sdbb.ch)      Français: [www.adresses.csfo.ch](http://www.adresses.csfo.ch)      Italiano: [www.indirizzi.csfo.ch](http://www.indirizzi.csfo.ch)

Vocational guidance centres are often known by special names or an abbreviation:

In German-speaking Switzerland	BIZ, Laufbahnzentrum
In French-speaking Switzerland	OP, SOPFA, OFPC, COS, OROSP, CIO, OCOSP
In Italian-speaking Switzerland	orientamento, UOSP

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Englisch	Wege zu Arbeit und Bildung in der Schweiz	<a href="http://www.berufsberatung.ch/migration">www.berufsberatung.ch/migration</a>
Anglais	Premiers pas vers le monde du travail et de la formation en Suisse	<a href="http://www.orientation.ch/migration">www.orientation.ch/migration</a>
Inglese	Il sistema del mondo del lavoro e della formazione in Svizzera	<a href="http://www.orientamento.ch/migrazione">www.orientamento.ch/migrazione</a>