

The Way 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?“ „Verstehen 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 language¹. 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 yourself. 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 useful for conversing with neighbours, for shopping, to enable you to discuss your children with teachers, to talk to a doctor, to fill out forms, for contact with government offices and authorities etc. Then, if in the future you would like to find another job (or have to) you will already have taken the first important step!

A summary of language courses can be found in the Internet.²

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 work, it is important which kind of permit you have and what abilities you possess. Quite apart from these, it can be very difficult to find a job in Switzerland, depending on the economic situation, 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 owing 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? Many people in Switzerland don't find their jobs from advertisements but through information from an acquaintance!

¹ Switzerland has four national languages: German, French, Italian and Romansch

² Sprachkurse im Internet: www.w-a-b.ch

If you are looking for a job, contact the Regional Job Centre.¹ Addresses are obtainable from your local commune. Job vacancies are published by these offices. Anybody looking for a job has the right to receive personal advice.

Acknowledgement of Foreign Diplomas

Did you have any further education resulting in a diploma in your country of origin? Let the authorities see this diploma. Even if it is accepted as of an equal standard, this does not guarantee a job in your profession. However, you will receive relevant information and will know in more detail which job to look for and which additional training could be useful.

Get in touch with the Federal Government Information Office² 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 a 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 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.

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 available³.

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

² 031 322 21 29;

www.bbt.admin.ch >Deutsch >Anerkennung ausländischer Diplome >Merkblatt
www.bbt.admin.ch >Français >Reconnaissance de diplômes et de certificats étrangers >notice d'information
www.bbt.admin.ch >Italiano >Riconoscimento dei diplomi e dei certificati esteri >promemoria

³ Additional Information on career counselling or in the internet:

Englisch – Zugang zu Arbeit und Bildung in der Schweiz – www.berufsberatung.ch/dyn/8188.asp
Anglais – Accéder à la formation et au monde du travail en Suisse – www.berufsberatung.ch/dyn/8225.asp
Inglese – Accesso al lavoro e alla formazione in Svizzera – www.berufsberatung.ch/dyn/8227.asp

Various Opportunities provided by the Career Counselling Centre¹

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

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, with a professional, career possibilities or look for new ideas. 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!

In German-speaking Switzerland	Further education	www.berufsberatung.ch/dyn/1385.asp
	Higher education	www.berufsberatung.ch/dyn/2680.asp
In French-speaking Switzerland		www.orientation.ch/dyn/1157.asp
In Italian-speaking Switzerland		www.orientamento.ch/dyn/1513.asp

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Each canton has at least one vocational guidance centre.

Addresses are obtainable from your school, your commune or under: www.svb-asosp.ch

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

In German-speaking Switzerland	BIZ, Laufbahnzentrum
In French-speaking Switzerland	OP, OSP, OROSP, CIO, CIP, OOF
In Italian-speaking Switzerland	orientamento, UOSP

Englisch – Zugang zu Arbeit und Bildung in der Schweiz – www.berufsberatung.ch/dyn/8188.asp

Anglais – Accéder à la formation et au monde du travail en Suisse – www.berufsberatung.ch/dyn/8225.asp

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