



Fact Sheet

Studying in Switzerland as a foreigner

You have a foreign diploma or certificate and you want to study in Switzerland. Here are the answers to frequently asked questions.

The Swiss education system at higher education area consists of three types of schools: universities, universities of applied sciences and universities of teacher education. A graphical overview, explains the Swiss education system:

www.swissuniversities.ch > Higher education area > Qualifications Framework.

Centralized source of information is www.swissuniversities.ch.

Where can I have my education recognised?



In Switzerland, a central organisation to recognise foreign baccalaureate does not exist. Each university makes its own decision about recognising certificates and qualifications. For a final decision on the recognition of your diploma/certificate, you have to contact the respective institute directly.

A non-binding, non-committal overview of foreign education, ordered by country, can be found at the CRUS website: www.swissuniversities.ch > Higher education area > Admission to Universities > Countries.

Which degree programs exist?

Information about all degree programs: www.berufsberatung.ch/studium or www.studyprogrammes.ch (teaching Language may be chosen).

What are the language requirements?

At Bachelor level, most lectures are held in the regional language of the university location (German, French or Italian). Normally, language knowledge at level C1 (Common Framework European References CFER) is required, and has to be proved by examination results or a recognised certificate. Several degree courses in English are available at Master and at post-Master level, especially in the areas of natural sciences and technology. Information regarding language requirements you will find on the universities website. Requirements regarding languages at the universities of applied sciences and universities of teacher education are similar. Please clarify these requirements with the respective institutes directly.

Do admission examinations exist?

Should the university not recognise your diploma, you have to go through a federal baccalaureate examination (www.sbf.admin.ch > Bildung > Maturität > Gymnasiale Maturität > Schweizerische Maturitätsprüfung).

The international «Baccalauréat International» and «Baccalauréat Européen» are further possibilities, as well as the British baccalaureate (IGCSE, A levels). To receive admission to one of the Swiss universities, restrictions may apply:

www.swissuniversities.ch > Higher education area > admission to universities.

Some private institutes offer international baccalaureates: www.swissprivateschoolregister.com.

Should your diploma or certificate receive a partial recognition, you can take the central complementary examination, organised by the Swiss universities ECUS (www.ecus-edu.ch). In order to apply for this examination, you will need an enrolment form from a Swiss university. The universities will decide about the extent of the examination and will allocate you to an examination centre either in Zurich or Geneva. Several institutes can help you prepare for the examinations:

- www.examprep.ch
- www.akad.ch/college > Vorbereitungskurse Hochschulen
- www.ecoleber.ch
- www.epsu.ch



The universities for applied sciences and for teacher education, as well as the Federal Institute of Technology, offer their own admission examinations. Please inform yourself at the respective institute.

At some universities, it is possible to join a course without having a baccalaureate (West Switzerland, Lucerne and Ticino). In this case, special admission procedures apply: www.swissuniversities.ch > Higher education area > Admission to Universities > Ohne Maturitätszeugnis.

Special cases (Federal Institute of Technology ETH, University of St. Gallen, medical degree programs)

ETH (Federal Institute of Technology)

Both federal institutes of technology in Zurich (ETHZ) and Lausanne (EPFL) conduct their own admission examinations on demand. For students from non-EU countries, the EPFL offers under certain conditions a preparation year CMS (cours de mathématiques spéciales).

- www.ethz.ch > Studies > Registration/Application > Admission Bachelor > 1st semester other certificates
- bachelor.epfl.ch/admissions



HSG (University of St. Gallen)

Students holding a foreign diploma are subject to admission restrictions (except for residents from Liechtenstein, foreigners holding a Swiss C permit, holders of a doctorate and special guests). Admission is subject to passing an examination by the HSG or an international test (GMAT, GRE or LSAT). www.unisg.ch > Studying > Admission > Admission to a Bachelor's Programme > foreign education.

Medical degree programs (human, veterinary medicine, dentistry)



For the obligatory qualifying examination, special admission requirements are applicable. (Swiss citizenship or citizen of Liechtenstein, etc.): www.swissuniversities.ch > Services > Applying to Medical School > International Student Admissions.

Study opportunities for refugees

Refugees with an academic background may be admitted as auditors at ETH Zurich and University of Zurich for a discovery semester. In Geneva, refugees are admitted to examinations.

- www.int.uzh.ch/en/in/refugees.html
- www.ethz.ch > Studies > International students > Information for Refugees

Which requirements apply for studying at a university of applied sciences?

In addition to a recognised diploma, in most cases a practical year in the field of the planned study is required. In case of a partial recognition, depending on the institute, admission examinations can be taken. Please contact the university website directly.

I am living abroad and want to study in Switzerland. How do I proceed?

Apply in due time at the university of your choice and clarify the admission requirements. All students travelling to Switzerland for the purpose of studying must apply for a residence permit. Depending on the country of origin, you only need a residence permit (residents of EU/EFTA countries) or a visa. In order to apply for a residence permit, you must submit an admission confirmation from the university, as well as proof of having sufficient funds at your disposal for living in Switzerland.

- www.swissuniversities.ch > Higher education area > Admission to Universities > Kontaktadressen
- www.ag.ch/migrationsamt > Merkblätter & Formulare > Merkblätter > Studienaufenthalte

How to finance my study?

For a scholarship, foreign students must first apply to the appropriate institutes in their country of origin.

Swiss students living abroad, recognised refugees and holders of a C permit apply in the canton where they live, or at the canton of their parents' residence. www.ag.ch/stipendien

Further Information: www.swissuniversities.ch > Services > Grants and Scholarships

Foreign students (maximum age: 35) admitted to a post-graduate study can apply to the federal scholarship commission for a scholarship: www.sbf.admin.ch > Education > Scholarships and grants.