



Factsheet

Education and career options in Switzerland: Swiss education system

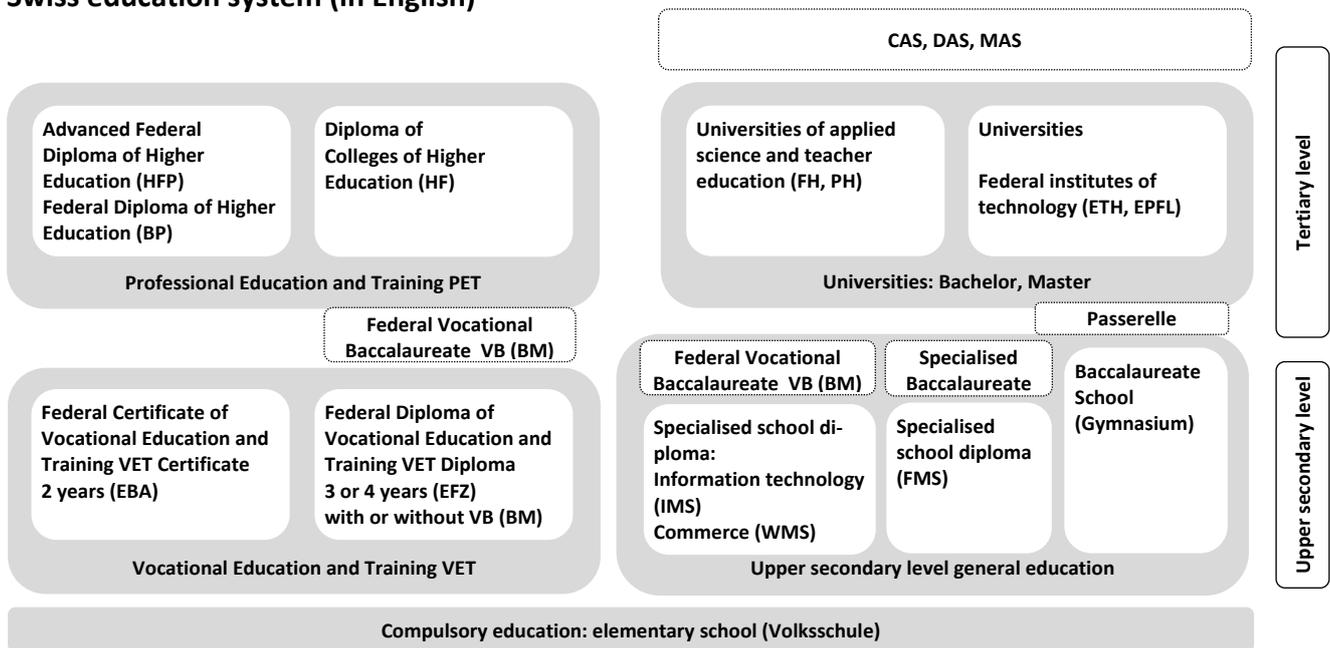
New in Switzerland? Are you wondering how the education system works? Are you planning to pursue a certain career, and would you like to find out how to reach this goal?

The Swiss education system offers the following specialities:

- In contrast to many other countries, most of the Swiss youth after finishing mandatory school complete a basic vocational education and training (VET), also known as an apprenticeship. There are about 250 different apprenticeships to choose from.
- The VET is based on a dual educational system with parallel on-the-job training and vocational school training. With this practice-oriented education Switzerland differs from many other countries that offer only school-oriented education systems. Furthermore, this education provides a direct and high-quality start into the business world.
- Alternatively, there is also a school-oriented way with several schools at upper secondary level.
- The Swiss education system is interlinked and permeable: it offers a wide variety of education and further training, which not only focuses on specialisation on a higher level, but also enables a different course leading to new qualifications.

We are looking forward to support and advise you in all aspects of basic and further education and training.

Swiss education system (in English)



(The abbreviations in brackets refer to the German short forms or names of the corresponding schools, universities, or VET.)

Required language levels

Normally, a B1 level of the local national language (according to the Common European Framework of Reference) is required for a VET or apprenticeship. For academic studies usually a level C1 is required.

Vocational education and training VET (Apprenticeship)

The VET is a combination of practice and theory: the practice-oriented education in a business is accompanied by attend-

ance at a part-time vocational school (general and occupation specific subjects). Furthermore, the apprentice will attend specific branch courses to learn further occupation specific skills. You need to find an apprenticeship yourself. The contract is made directly with the company. In some occupations it is necessary to understand Swiss German. Knowledge of French, English or Italian may also be needed.

Upper secondary level general education

There are four different school options in the canton of Aargau. The Baccalaureate School offers a wide range of mandatory and obligatory subjects. These studies aim at all universities. The upper secondary specialised school focuses on skills development in the following fields: healthcare/natural sciences, information and communication, pedagogy, social work and design. Additional specialised schools offer a full-time school-oriented VET including a Federal Vocational Baccalaureate (VB) in commerce (WMS) and information technology (IMS). In general, the requirement for admission to these schools is a certain average grade. If you are moving to Switzerland, it is best to contact the school principal's or rector's office directly as they decide on admission by themselves. At some baccalaureate schools it is also possible to acquire an International Baccalaureate (IB).

Professional Education and Training (PET)

The Advanced and Federal Diploma of Higher Education are practice-oriented and theory-based further training courses, that are aiming at a higher specialisation, technical responsibility, or leadership skills. Very often, they are based on a vocational education and training (VET) in the corresponding area and require work experience. The Diploma of a College of Higher Education is a broader also practice-oriented further education, which aims at professional expertise and management function. A College of Higher Education can involve further vocational training in the same area or a reorientation. Generally, a VET or an upper secondary level school is required.

Universities

Each type of university provides training in certain fields of study. The Federal Vocational Baccalaureate VB grants admission to the Universities of applied sciences in the same area (in some cases persons with adequate experiences may be admitted «sur dossier» or with a diploma of a College of Higher Education in the same field). Students at the Universities of Applied Sciences usually need to have prior work experience. For attending universities and ETH/EPFL usually a baccalaureate «Maturität» from a secondary-level school (Gymnasium) is needed or an additional exam. Alternative option is a «Passerelle» after VB for Swiss Universities.

There is no central office in Switzerland that evaluates foreign school certificates/diplomas. Each university decides autonomously on the recognition of foreign certificates/diplomas and on admission to their studies. The Rectors' Conference of Universities offers a non-binding evaluation of your previous educational background: www.swissuniversities.ch > Service > Swiss ENIC – Evaluation of Foreign Diplomas. Each university also decides on admission to doctoral studies and post-doctoral studies directly.

CAS (Certificate of Advanced Studies), DAS (Diploma of Advanced Studies), MAS (Master of Advanced Studies):

Many universities offer continuing education at this level. Prerequisite is often a university degree. The administration of the universities can decide individually about the admission of people with other experiences and education.

Links

- www.berufsberatung.ch/neu-in-der-schweiz: Information on education in Switzerland (in several languages)
- www.beratungsdienste.ch: Vocational guidance and career counselling (in German only)
- www.ag.ch/migrationsamt: Office for Migration and Integration of the canton of Aargau
- www.hello-aargau.ch: Information about the canton of Aargau in 13 languages
- www.sbf.admin.ch/diploma > English Selected: Recognition of Foreign Qualifications
- www.vpet.ch: Compilation of documents about vocational and professional education in Switzerland and a glossary
- www.ag.ch/mittelschulen: Information about the upper secondary level general education (in German only)