

## Imprint

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**Page 17:** Eidgenössische Hochschule für Sport Magglingen EHSM / Ueli Känzig  
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## Why Study in Switzerland?

*Switzerland is an excellent location for living, studying, and working. Its cultural variety, beautiful landscape, and innovative environment offer first-class surroundings for both personal well-being and career advancement.*

*Switzerland is one of the most competitive countries in the world and widely recognised internationally as a centre of excellence in education, research, and innovation. Great emphasis is placed on ensuring the autonomy of Swiss universities and researchers, on fostering competition and quality, and on encouraging a broad-minded outlook.*

*Switzerland's high-quality education system and its multicultural society mean that a large part of the population is fluent in several languages. English is widely spoken and used as a language of business, higher education, and research.*

*Switzerland's small size has favoured the emergence of well-developed research and development networks, whose expertise is continuously implemented in the economy and society. At the same time, Switzerland is part of the global community and maintains a worldwide network of cooperations and partnerships in education and science.*

*Common to the country's richly diverse higher education system is a drive for uncompromising quality in teaching and research. Swiss universities play an active role in shaping the future with the necessary responsibility. So be a part of this quality!*

**Welcome to Swiss universities!**

# Facts and Figures<sup>1</sup>

Official Name  
**Switzerland/  
 Swiss Confederation**

Total Area  
 41285 square kilometres. More than two thirds of the country's territory are occupied by the Alps.



Location  
 Switzerland is situated in the heart of Europe and borders on France, Germany, Austria, the Principality of Liechtenstein (FL), and Italy



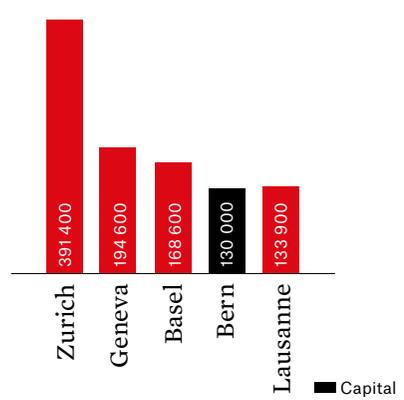
Time Zone  
**CET (UTC+1)**

Currency (January 2016)  
**Swiss franc (CHF)**  
**1 CHF = 1.02 \$**  
**1 CHF = 0.92 €**

Population (2014)  
**8.24 million**

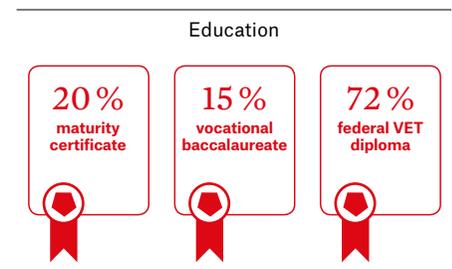
Including approximately 24 % resident foreigners. More than two-thirds of the population live in urban areas.

Major Cities (2014)



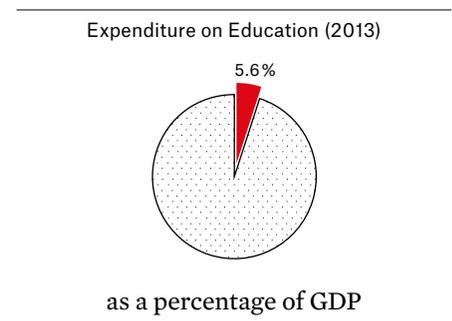
Languages (2013)

**4**  
 63.5 % German (predominantly Swiss German), 22.5 % French, 8 % Italian, 0.5 % Romansh, English is widely spoken.

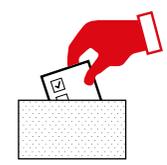


Universities  
**12<sup>a</sup> + 8<sup>b</sup> + 20<sup>c</sup>**  
<sup>a</sup> doctoral/research universities  
<sup>b</sup> universities of applied sciences and arts  
<sup>c</sup> universities of teacher education

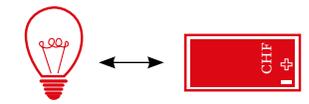
Students (2014)  
 233 600, including approximately 25 % international students.



Political System  
 Switzerland is a federal, democratic state. Each of the 26 cantons has its own constitution, parliament, government, and judicial system.



Economy  
 The main sectors include microtechnology, high-tech, biotechnology and pharmaceuticals, banking and insurance, tourism and international organisations. The service sector employs the largest number of people. The country has a flexible job market and the unemployment rate is low.



International Organisations  
 Switzerland is home to various international organisations, including the second largest UN office (ILO, UNCTAD, UNHCR, WHO, etc.), the World Trade Organisation, the Red Cross, the World Economic Forum, and the International Olympic Committee.

<sup>1</sup> All statistical details provided in this brochure are from the Swiss Federal Statistical Office (www.bfs.admin.ch).

## Studying in Switzerland<sup>2</sup>

### Swiss Higher Education

Swiss higher education is divided into doctoral/research universities, universities of applied sciences and arts, and universities of teacher education.

Switzerland has 12 doctoral/research universities (10 cantonal universities and 2 federal institutes of technology), 8 universities of applied sciences and arts (including one private, state-recognised institution), 20 universities of teacher education (14 independent institutions, 2 integrated into universities of applied sciences, 2 integrated into cantonal universities, and 2 affiliated institutions), and several other state-funded university institutions.

In the 2014/15 autumn semester, over 233 600 students were matriculated at Swiss universities: of this total enrolment, 51% were female and approximately 25% were international students. 144 000 students were enrolled at universities, 70 200 at universities of applied sciences and arts, and 19 500 at universities of teacher education.

The three types of university are each represented in German-, French-, and Italian-speaking Switzerland. Please refer to page 24 ff for details on programme availability, campus locations, and tuition languages.

#### **Doctoral/Research Universities – Universities of Applied Sciences and Arts/Universities of Teacher Education: Basic Research – Practice Orientation**

The educational remit of Switzerland's doctoral/research universities is to offer degree programmes on a high scientific and theory based level and to undertake basic research. The remit of the universities of applied sciences and arts and the universities of teacher education is to provide scientific and professional education, to conduct applied research, and to promote cooperation with practice and industry.

Many degree programmes are offered only at doctoral/research universities, such as all humanities degrees, many science degrees, and some engineering degrees. Some degree programmes, such as landscape architecture and various health sciences, are available only at universities of applied sciences and arts. The same applies to degrees in music, theatre, film, art, and design. Universities of teacher education offer practice-

oriented training in various subject areas such as pre-primary education, primary education, secondary education I and II, etc.

#### **Degree Levels**

Since 2006, all Swiss universities have been offering their degree courses in accordance with the Bologna system. They have adopted the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), which aims to foster student mobility by ensuring the recognition of credits obtained elsewhere. The [nqf.ch](http://nqf.ch)-HS<sup>3</sup> qualifications framework defines and describes Swiss higher education levels and the qualifications offered with a view to enhancing national and international comparability.

The first-level degree awarded is the **Bachelor's**. The standard duration of a full-time Bachelor's degree course is three years (180 ECTS credits).

The second-level degree awarded is the **Master's**. Students seeking admission to a Master's programme must hold a Bachelor's degree. Master's programmes deepen first-degree knowledge and enable students either to specialise in a particular field or to acquire interdisciplinary training. Master's programmes usually last three to four semesters and are awarded 90 to 120 ECTS credits.

**The Doctorate or PhD** is the highest academic degree awarded under the Bologna system. Candidates seeking admission to doctoral studies must hold a Master's degree from a doctoral/research university. Candidates able to demonstrate proven scientific qualifications may also pursue doctoral studies with a Master's degree from other types of higher education institutions. Research doctorate degrees are generally awarded after 3–5 years of postgraduate research and the submission of a written thesis. Doctoral degrees are awarded by the 10 cantonal universities and the 2 federal institutes of technology.

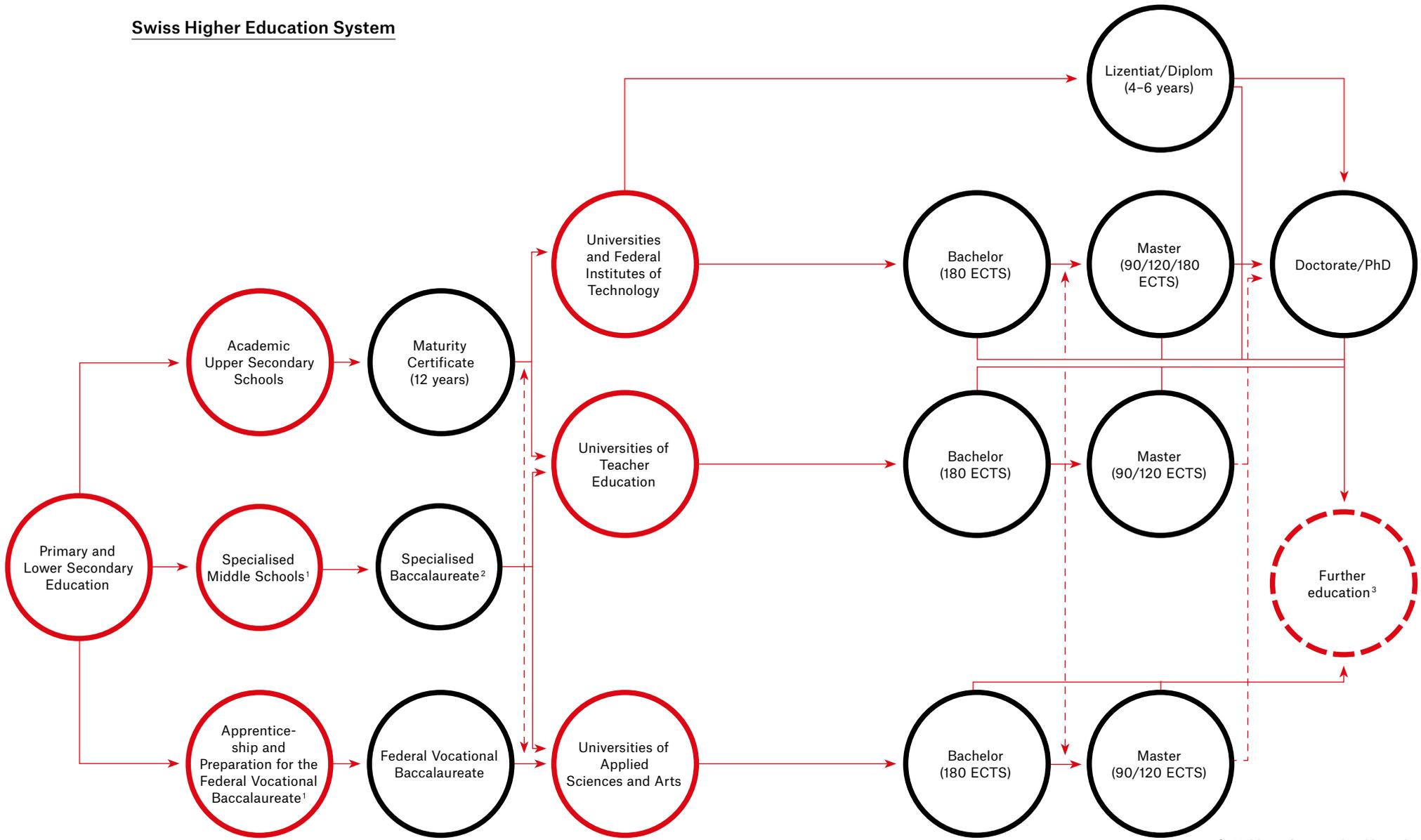
#### **Further Education at Tertiary-Level-A**

Swiss universities also offer Master of Advanced Studies (MAS) degrees (minimum 60 ECTS credits or one-year of full-time study). The MAS degree does not grant admission to doctoral degree programmes. Admission to MAS programmes usually requires an academic degree (from a doctoral/research university, a university of applied sciences and arts, or a university of teacher education).

<sup>2</sup> A part of this section is based on the brochure «Studieren in der Schweiz» (SDBB).

<sup>3</sup> [www.qualifikationsrahmen.ch](http://www.qualifikationsrahmen.ch)

**Swiss Higher Education System**



Primary and Lower Secondary Level

Upper Secondary Level

Tertiary Level

- Normal path
- - Additional achievement required

<sup>1</sup> Graduates of these schools may access UTE pre-school and primary school teacher training courses subject to passing an additional examination to obtain a certificate equivalent to a specialised baccalaureate with a pedagogic orientation.

<sup>2</sup> Holders of a specialised baccalaureate may access some UAS Bachelor's programmes under certain predefined conditions. Candidates who hold a specialised baccalaureate with a pedagogical orientation may also be admitted to certain UTE courses (pre-school or primary school teacher training).

<sup>3</sup> Master of Advanced Studies (MAS) (≥ 60 ETCS)  
 Diploma of Advanced Studies (DAS) (≥ 30 ETCS)  
 Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) (≥ 10 ETCS)  
 Teaching Diploma for Academic Upper Secondary Schools (60 ETCS). Admission requires a Master's degree in one or two teaching disciplines.

## Practical Details

### Academic Calendar

*The Swiss academic year is divided into two semesters: the autumn semester generally runs from week 37/38 to week 50/51<sup>4</sup>, the spring semester from week 8/9 to week 22–24.*

### Admission

Swiss universities have decision-making autonomy on student admission. Each university takes its admission decisions independently but in accordance with international agreements and with a legally binding outcome regarding the recognition of educational qualifications.

### **Doctoral/Research Universities**

#### • Bachelor's Degrees

Candidates seeking admission to Bachelor's programmes at doctoral/research universities must hold a Swiss maturity certificate or an equivalent foreign upper secondary school-leaving certificate qualifying candidates for university entrance (general higher education entrance qualification).

Candidates holding a valid Swiss maturity certificate or an equivalent entrance qualification are as a rule eligible to enter all degree programmes. Exempt from this regulation are medical programmes (human medicine, dental medicine, and veterinary medicine), chiropractic medicine, human movement and sports sciences.

International students seeking admission to doctoral/research universities must provide evidence of an equivalent level of previous education. Other admission requirements include a command of the tuition language and the availability of a sufficient number of places on a course. Due to the limited number of places, international students are not admitted to degree programmes in medicine at Swiss universities, except in some special cases.

#### • Master's Degrees

Candidates seeking admission to Master's programmes at doctoral/research universities must hold either a Bachelor's degree in the same subject area from another doctoral/research university or an equivalent Bachelor's degree in the same subject from a university abroad. Admission may be subject to candidates having to satisfy specific requirements. Admission decisions for candidates holding a Bachelor's degree from another type of university are taken by each respective university.

In addition to a Bachelor's degree in the particular area of study, admission to specialised Master's programmes may be subject to other requirements as specified by each university.

### **Universities of Applied Sciences and Arts (UAS)**

#### • Bachelor's Degrees

Candidates seeking admission to Universities of Applied Sciences and Arts (UAS) must hold either a federal vocational baccalaureate or an equivalent upper secondary school-leaving certificate. Holders of a Swiss maturity certificate or an equivalent foreign certificate are eligible for UAS admission provided they have gained the required work experience relevant to the chosen area of study. Holders of a specialised baccalaureate may enter Bachelor's programmes related to their particular specialisation and/or under certain predefined conditions. Admission to music, theatre, and arts degrees requires no work experience but the positive assessment of individual artistic aptitude. Additional admission requirements may apply to certain programmes.

#### • Master's Degrees

Candidates seeking admission to a Master's programme must hold a Bachelor's degree. Each university reserves the right to consider foreign Bachelor's degrees valid or not for admission to its Master's programmes and to stipulate its own admission requirements (e.g., entrance examinations, further requirements, etc.).

<sup>4</sup> For some universities, up to week 4

## Universities of Teacher Education (UTE)

### • Bachelor's Degrees

According to the regulations of the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Directors of Education (EDK) and depending on the chosen programme, candidates seeking admission to a university of teacher education must have a Swiss maturity certificate, or an EDK-recognised teaching diploma, or a degree from a university of applied sciences (UAS).

Candidates holding a specialised baccalaureate (specialised maturity certificate) with an education option may also be admitted to certain programmes (e.g., teacher training for preschool and primary levels).

### • Master's Degrees

Candidates seeking admission to a teacher training course to teach at upper secondary level must hold a recognised Master's degree in one or two school subjects. Candidates seeking admission to a teacher training course in special needs education (early years or special needs education) must hold either a diploma for teaching standard classes, or a degree in speech therapy or in psychomotor therapy (at least to Bachelor's level), or a Bachelor's degree in a related area of study. The EDK regulations on the recognition of educational qualifications provide information about minimum admission requirements. Universities of teacher education (UTE) may impose additional admission requirements. Please refer to the UTE websites for more detailed information on admission requirements.

### Admission to MAS Programmes

Master of Advanced Studies programmes (MAS) are further education courses that should not be confused with standard Master's programmes. Candidates seeking admission to MAS programmes must as a rule hold an academic degree (from a university, a university of applied sciences, or a university of teacher education) and have gained practical experience in their chosen area of study.

### Admission to Doctoral Studies

Admission to doctoral studies lies in the autonomous responsibility of each doctoral/research university. Admission decisions are taken on the basis of individual aptitude and qualifications.

*Doctoral studies are designed on the basis of Master's programmes offered at doctoral/research universities.*

Candidates holding a Master's degree from another type of higher education institution and with proven scientific qualifications may also be admitted to doctoral studies.

### Admission Information

- University admission offices (see page 44 ff)
- Doctoral/research universities: [www.swissuniversities.ch](http://www.swissuniversities.ch) > Services > Admission to Universities
- Universities of Applied Sciences and Arts (UAS): [www.swissuniversities.ch](http://www.swissuniversities.ch) > Services > Admission to UAS (applied sciences)
- Universities of Teacher Education (UTE): [www.swissuniversities.ch](http://www.swissuniversities.ch) > Services > Admission to a UTE

### Tuition Language

*Bachelor's programmes are usually taught in a national language (German, French, or Italian; some bilingual). Several universities offer specific programmes in English.*

All Swiss universities require a good knowledge of the language of instruction. Prospective Master's students are advised to have a good working knowledge of English since such degree programmes are being taught increasingly in English.

See details: [www.studyprogrammes.ch](http://www.studyprogrammes.ch)

### Application and Matriculation

Admission to the degree programmes offered at Swiss higher education institutions is subject to a compulsory admission procedure and binding application deadlines. There is a two-step application procedure: (1) Application submission by a filing deadline (most universities provide online application forms). Applicants indicate their chosen faculty and degree programme on the application form. Following timely filing, applicants will receive written confirmation of their application, an application fee invoice, and a list of supporting documents to be submitted. (2) Applicants send the requested documents to the university. As soon as their documents have been checked and upon receipt of payment of the application fee, applicants are sent formal confirmation of their matriculation.

Please refer to the respective university website for details about application and matriculation procedures.

University application deadline (doctoral/research universities) is generally 30 April for autumn admissions. Spring admissions are restricted. For application deadlines and special provisions for medical studies, please refer to [www.swissuniversities.ch](http://www.swissuniversities.ch) > Services > Applying to Medical School. Please be aware that certain programmes have specific application deadlines and refer to the D/RU websites for further information (p. 44–47).

University of Applied Sciences (UAS) application deadlines vary. The UAS academic year begins in the autumn semester. Entrance to some programmes is also possible in the spring semester. Please refer to the UAS websites for application deadlines (p. 48–50).

University of Teacher Education (UTE) filling periods also differ from one institution to another (from November to May). The academic year generally begins in the autumn semester. Please refer to the UTE websites for further information about application deadlines (p. 51–56).

### ECTS and Degree Programme Duration

Students attending Swiss Universities are awarded European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits. This makes degree programmes comparable and facilitates access to degree programmes at home and abroad. Courses and lectures are awarded a certain number of credits. ECTS credits are awarded to students subject to adequate attendance and performance.

Swiss higher education has a three-cycle structure: (1) 180 ECTS credits for three years of full-time study leading to a Bachelor's degree. (2) 90 to 120 ECTS credits for one and a half to two years of full-time study leading to a Master's degree. (3) A doctoral degree is awarded in general after 3–5 years of postgraduate research and the submission of a written thesis.

### Tuition fees

*Semester fees at public universities vary between CHF 500 and CHF 2 000. International students are charged higher tuition fees at some universities. Private universities charge higher tuition fees.*

Compared to other countries, Swiss higher education tuition fees are moderate. Please refer to page 44 ff for details about university tuition fees. Depending on the university location, area of study, and personal needs, the estimated total cost for one academic year ranges between CHF 20 000 and CHF 30 000.

### Funding

To find out whether a Swiss university offers scholarships to international students, candidates are advised to consult the respective university website. The Swiss Government awards Excellence Scholarships to foreign scholars and artists holding a recognised university degree. Detailed information about offer and requirements is available on the website of the Federal Commission for Scholarships for Foreign Students (FCS)<sup>5</sup>.

### Working while studying

*While studying in Switzerland, international students are allowed to work a maximum of 15 hours a week. Full-time work is permitted during the semester holidays.*

Students must notify the responsible immigration authorities of any employment pursued during their stay in Switzerland. Students from non-EU/EFTA countries are allowed to pursue gainful employment only 6 months after starting their degree programme.

### Entry/Visa and Residence Permit

Different visa and residence permit regulations are applicable to EU/EFTA citizens and to citizens of other countries.

Students from EU/EFTA countries must register with the local Resident Registration Office within 14 days of arrival in Switzerland and are required to apply for a residence permit. The following supporting documents are usually required:

- completed residence permit application
- valid passport or identity card
- proof of university enrollment
- evidence of sufficient funds (e.g., certificate or certified document of a bank authorised in Switzerland)
- proof of address at place of residence
- 2 passport photographs

<sup>5</sup> Website: [www.sbf.admin.ch/themen/01366/01380/02593/index.html?lang=en](http://www.sbf.admin.ch/themen/01366/01380/02593/index.html?lang=en)

Students from all other countries must contact the Swiss embassy or consulate in their home country<sup>6</sup> and apply for a visa prior to entering Switzerland. The visa processing time is at least 8 weeks. If the responsible immigration or police authorities approve the application, applicants are deemed to have satisfied the requirements for entry into Switzerland and for taking up residence for the purpose of study.

Foreign nationals who are not EU/EFTA citizens and who do not require a visa should consult the Swiss embassy or consulate in their home country about current entry and residence requirements and formalities.

### Accommodation while studying

*Depending on the university location, finding accommodation can be difficult. Students are therefore advised to search for accommodation in good time prior to their arrival.*

Useful student accommodation links:

- [www.wgzimmer.ch](http://www.wgzimmer.ch)
- [www.students.ch/wohnen](http://www.students.ch/wohnen)
- [www.swissuniversities.ch](http://www.swissuniversities.ch) > Higher education area > Studying in Switzerland > Apartments

### Health Insurance Coverage

All persons living in Switzerland for more than three months, including international students, must have basic health insurance coverage. Students from countries that provide international mutual health coverage may be exempted from compulsory health insurance. Other students may be exempted if they have equivalent health insurance coverage in their home country.

<sup>6</sup> Website: [www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/home/rep.html](http://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/home/rep.html)

