



**KEY FIGURES**



Sources: SECO; SERI, 2019

## VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN SWITZERLAND

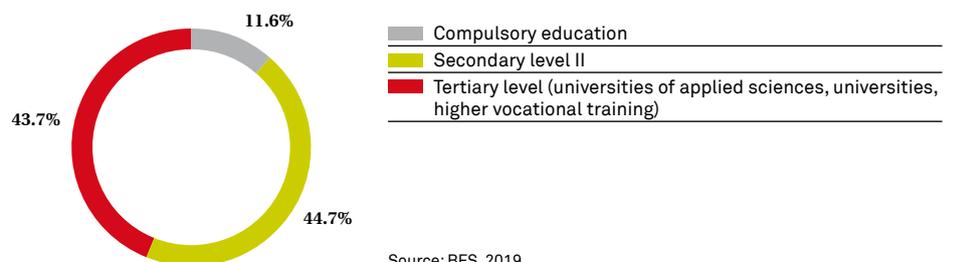
**AT A GLANCE**

The high quality of vocational training is a central pillar of the innovative strength and efficiency of the Swiss economy. A total of 230 different vocations can be learned through direct channels in Switzerland. The vocational training courses, each lasting two to four years, focus on professional qualifications that are actually in demand and on jobs that are currently available. The resulting highly educated professionals form the basis for an excellent talent pool for companies based in Switzerland. The economy thus has an ideal selection of specialist professionals at its disposal, thanks to this combination of academic education and vocational training.

The Swiss vocational training has a high labor market relevance and is an integral part of the education system. It is divided into sectors: upper-secondary level vocational education and training (VET) and tertiary-level professional education. The VET system is based on the duality between theory and practice. The Swiss dual education system has generated great international interest. Switzerland thus exchanges knowledge on both diplomatic and technical levels.

**Educational Status of the Swiss Population**

% of permanent residents aged 25–64 according to highest educational qualification, 2018



## SECONDARY LEVEL II: BASIC VOCATIONAL TRAINING

- Switzerland has a training system that optimally meets the requirements of the economy. According to the WEF's Global Competitiveness Report (Switzerland's overall position: 1st place, 2017-2018), the Swiss training system performs best in an international comparison.

### Quality of the Education System

International rankings for training and skills, 2017

Country	Rank
 Switzerland	1
 Singapore	2
 Finland	3
 USA	4
 Qatar	5
 The Netherlands	6
 Ireland	7
 Canada	8
 Germany	9
 New Zealand	10

Source: WEF Global Competitiveness Index, 2017 – 2018

- Upon completing obligatory education, around **two thirds of young people in Switzerland opt to undertake foundational vocational training**. This proportion has remained steady for many years.

### The ten most frequently chosen initial professional training programs

Number of learners, 2018

Profession	Total
Business administration	13,842
Health specialist	4,795
Retail specialist	4,708
Care specialist	3,657
IT technician	2,100
Electrician	1,905
Logistician	1,724
Chef	1,595
Illustrator	1,554
Retail Assistant	1,450

Source: BFS, 2019

- At **secondary level II**, young people qualify for the first time after compulsory education. A completed education on the secondary level II does not only give them access to the next education level. It also prepares young adults to enter the labor market as qualified workers. The graduation rate at secondary level II is **91.3%** in Switzerland.

- There are two sides to the **apprenticeship market**: host companies that offer apprenticeship positions (supply side) and young people looking for apprenticeship positions (demand side). The state acts as an intermediary: it ensures the best possible apprenticeship conditions for host companies; it encourages the creation of apprenticeship positions; and it provides guidance and counseling services to young people to help them choose a career.
- Apprentices increase their productivity during their training and are therefore more valuable to businesses. The **cost-benefit ratio** is an important factor for a business when deciding whether to become involved in vocational training. Employers offering training programs in Switzerland can generally achieve a **positive net gain**. On the one hand this is because apprentices can be employed at low wages, and on the other hand, because their having been trained according to the company's requirements leads to lower recruitment costs. Apprentices also have a tendency to be loyal to the company where they trained, often returning at a later stage in their career.
- Most apprenticeships take place in small businesses. In addition, there are different forms of organization of vocational training through training associations and training centers.
- Training service providers** such as libs (Industrielle Berufslehren Schweiz) guarantee professional and practical training (see case study). Libs works with over 100 companies and is the largest provider of basic vocational training to Swiss industry.

### Switzerland's positions at the last world championships of vocational skills

EuroSkills	
Gothenburg 2016	1
Lille 2014	4
Spa 2012	2
Lisbon 2010	2
WorldSkills	
Abu Dhabi 2017	2
São Paulo 2015	4
Leipzig 2013	2
London 2011	3

Source: www.swiss-skills.ch, 2019

- For decades, Switzerland has been **one of the leading nations in the world championships of vocational skills** - thanks to the Swiss vocational training system, which ensures high-quality, practical and versatile basic vocational training.

## TERTIARY LEVEL: VOCATIONAL BACCALAUREATE, UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES AND HIGHER VOCATIONAL TRAINING

- The **higher vocational training and education** forms the **tertiary level of the education system**, with the universities of applied sciences (UAS) and the universities/ ETHs. Advanced professional education and training enables professionals with a Swiss Federal Certificate of Competence or a similar degree to specialize in a particular subject and to enhance their specialist knowledge. It is also possible to obtain qualifications in Corporate Management. The number of qualifications earned in higher vocational training has almost tripled between 2000 and 2018. The main reason for this was the recognition of specialized studies in the field of health.
- Slightly more than a third (38%) of all young adults have a **baccalaureate**. Approximately 20% achieve a **high-school baccalaureate** qualifying them for university studies, with 15% receiving a **vocational baccalaureate**. This percentage is somewhat lower than in other countries, since school leavers with vocational training also receive a competitive and very prestigious education and have access to training programs at the tertiary level.
- The **vocational baccalaureate** makes it possible for students to transfer to a **university of applied sciences** without having to take any further examinations. It can be completed during the apprenticeship or afterwards. By taking an additional examination, the “Vocational Baccalaureate - Universities”, it is also possible to transfer to a university or a Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH).
- The universities of applied science are divided into seven regions. They have two stages – Bachelor and Master degrees – and are active in 12 different subjects. There are also additional private UAS which teach in the areas of economy and health. The number of bachelor’s degrees increased by 60% between 2010 and 2018. The selection of master’s courses on offer has

### Graduates of universities of applied sciences by field of study and level of graduation, 2018

Field of study	Bachelor	Master
Architecture, Construction and Planning	935	174
Engineering and IT	2,509	279
Chemistry and Life Sciences	454	158
Agriculture and Forestry	149	0
Business, Management and Services	4,316	869
Design	681	241
Sports	39	24
Music, Theater and other Arts	841	1,177
Applied Linguistics	118	47
Social Work	1,735	88
Applied Psychology	135	88
Health	1,751	112
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,663</b>	<b>3,257</b>

Source: BFS – SHIS-studex, 2019

also been expanded over the years.

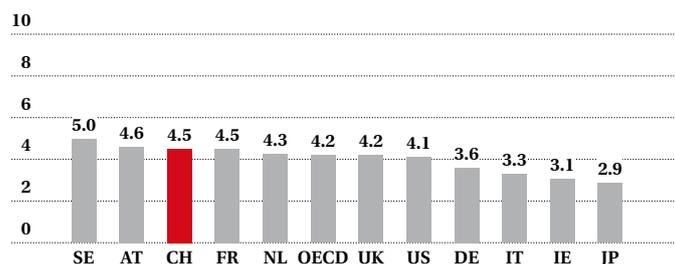
- According to the Global Competitiveness Report, Switzerland is the world’s number one in the categories of **labor market efficiency, business sophistication and innovation**. This underlines the high status of training and further education in Switzerland.

## RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN DIPLOMAS AND FUNDING

- The State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) **recognizes many foreign qualifications and diplomas**. Recognition makes it easier for holders of foreign qualifications to carry out a professional activity regulated in Switzerland and to integrate into the Swiss labor market.
- Switzerland works closely with the European Union within the framework of the Swiss-EU Bilateral Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons (AFMP) and has adopted the EU’s system of **mutual recognition of professional qualifications**. Nationals from non-EU states are also entitled to apply for recognition of their foreign qualifications in Switzerland. SERI’s national con-

### Expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP

Public funds, primary to tertiary level of education (2015)



Source: OECD “Education at a Glance 2018”

tact point provides general information about the recognition of foreign qualifications.

- **Public investment** in vocational training amounted to around **3.5 billion Swiss francs annually** in recent years. The cantons, which are responsible for implementing vocational training, take on three quarters of the costs. The federal government’s share is one quarter of the costs of the public sector. Up to ten percent of the federal funding is slated for supporting development projects and special services within the public sector.

## TESTIMONIAL



“The Swiss education system produces top-class educated practitioners and highly qualified university graduates. The apprenticeship scheme is especially important for Siemens Schweiz. We employ over 260 apprentices and train them in our own training centers in Zug and Zurich and on the job in our departments. By doing this, we are actively promoting our young employees and combating the shortage of labor. After all, the employees in this country are certainly not lacking in motivation - the Swiss are unbelievably motivated and loyal. I have never experienced such commitment elsewhere.”

MATTHIAS REBELLIOUS  
CEO of Siemens Switzerland  
[www.siemens.ch](http://www.siemens.ch)

## CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

- The Swiss vocational education and training (VET) system has generated great international interest. Switzerland **exchanges knowledge** on both diplomatic and technical levels. It also receives numerous foreign delegations interested in finding out more about the Swiss system. At the same time, Switzerland maintains a continuous dialogue with countries that have their own VET systems or would like to develop one. In 2014, 2016 and 2018, the **International Congress on Vocational and Professional Education and Training was held in Winterthur** and served as a platform for open dialogue and the exchange of good practices between 70 different countries.
- Switzerland indirectly takes part in EU education and youth programs (**Erasmus+**). Among other things, this includes funding for mobility and cooperation activities in the area of VPET ([www.movetia.ch](http://www.movetia.ch)).

## CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

### Authorities and regulators

State Secretariat for Education,  
Research and Innovation (SERI)  
[www.sbf.admin.ch](http://www.sbf.admin.ch)

Swiss Federal Institute for  
Vocational Education and Training  
(SFIVET)  
[www.sfvvet.swiss](http://www.sfvvet.swiss)

swissuniversities  
[www.swissuniversities.ch](http://www.swissuniversities.ch)

### Further information

Vocational and professional educa-  
tion and training in Switzerland -  
Facts and figures 2019  
[www.sbf.admin.ch](http://www.sbf.admin.ch)

Overview of universities of applied  
sciences in Switzerland (in German,  
French and Italian)  
[www.sbf.admin.ch](http://www.sbf.admin.ch)

Overview of all courses and studies  
[www.studyprogrammes.ch](http://www.studyprogrammes.ch)

Recognition of foreign qualifications  
and diplomas  
[www.sbf.admin.ch](http://www.sbf.admin.ch)

Specialist information on vocational  
training, vocational guidance and  
the labor market, with an overview  
of current developments in the  
domain of vocational training (in  
German, French and Italian)  
[www.panorama.ch](http://www.panorama.ch)

University Rankings  
[www.universityrankings.ch](http://www.universityrankings.ch)

Professional register of all  
federally-accredited professions  
(in German, French and Italian)  
[www.bvz.admin.ch/bvz](http://www.bvz.admin.ch/bvz)

Apprenticeship barometer:  
survey among young people and  
enterprises on the apprenticeship  
situation (in German, French and  
Italian)  
[www.sbf.admin.ch](http://www.sbf.admin.ch)

Leading Houses - for the sustain-  
able development of vocational  
training research in Switzerland  
[www.sbf.admin.ch](http://www.sbf.admin.ch)

Center for Research in Economics  
of Education  
[www.ffb.unibe.ch](http://www.ffb.unibe.ch)

National campaign focusing on sup-  
porting talent (in German, French  
and Italian)  
[www.berufsbildungplus.ch](http://www.berufsbildungplus.ch)

### S-GE resources

Handbook for Investors  
[www.s-ge.com/handbookforin-vestors](http://www.s-ge.com/handbookforin-vestors)

More fact sheets on  
Switzerland as a business location  
[www.s-ge.com/factsheets](http://www.s-ge.com/factsheets)

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Are you expanding in Europe and considering Switzerland as a business location for your company? Here, you can get free advice and support throughout the entire settlement process: We will connect you unbureaucratically with the cantonal business promotion agencies and provide you with expert contacts for matters such as taxes, real estate, etc.

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