



Study Switzerland

The university education system:

Universities in Switzerland are seen as some of the best in the world and score highly in many international league tables. In the recent years [QS World University Rankings 2024](#) Swiss universities performed especially well and it could be said making the Swiss university system the third best in the world, after the USA and U.K. (but be careful of these comparisons as this can be a little misleading). Swiss universities are seen as particularly strong in areas such as Business, Engineering, Hospitality & Tourism and world-renowned culinary schools – but also offer lots more options which students should explore.

Swiss universities have an international feel, with around 20% of international students and about 50% of researchers and professors from overseas.

Switzerland has three official languages: German, French and Italian, with the language of study often determined by where the university is based. You will generally find universities in all regions who are offering courses taught in English (especially the case for the private / Hospitality Management institutions).

Public universities: are split into **Universities**; These are generally highly scientific and theory based with many options only offered at these universities, such as humanities, many of the science options and some engineering [find out more here](#). **Universities of Applied Science**; focus on applied sciences and arts, often with strong links to industry and including integrated work placements. Here you will generally find many of the Health Science and Art (Art & Design, Music, Drama, etc) options, [find out more here](#). Switzerland also maintain their **specialist Universities in Teacher Education (UTEs)**; with a practice-oriented focus on teacher training (and related fields) [find out more here](#). Plus, finally the [Graduate Institute of International ad Development Global Affairs](#) for obvious reasons is based in Geneva (UN) with a specific focus on internationalism and global affairs (Note courses are postgraduate).

To explore these options and specific universities: [List of Swiss Universities - study in switzerland+](#)

Beyond the public universities Switzerland also has a significant number of private institutions, possibly most famously its many [Hospitality / Culinary Schools](#). (particularly useful for links and offers some insight, but the ratings are questionable). A quick look at the 2023 world league table based on subjects (this is latest version) demonstrates the strength Switzerland has in this particular area. [QS World University Rankings for Hospitality and Leisure Management 2023 | Top Universities](#)

Generally, public universities are 3-year single honours courses, with the Applied Science universities including an integral work placement. The Private Hospitality schools are also generally 3-years, some offering foundation, extended work placement options taking them to 4-years in length.



**Tuition:**

Courses at Swiss universities generally start in September, but you can find some courses with Spring start dates. There are a number of bachelors courses taught in English, but a much greater range at postgraduate level. Class sizes and teaching style vary a huge amount between the institutions and it is important that prospective students research individual institutions and courses carefully.

The application process and entry requirements:

Unlike many other countries (think UCAS in the UK and to some extent the Common App. in the USA) Switzerland doesn't have a centralised application process. Applications for all types of institutions are made direct. Generally, the application process requires the completion of an institution's specific application form – these can include transcripts, predicted grades, often motivational essay, with some asking for a CV. Many will seek references (generally sought from your current school). You will generally also be required to pay an application fee.

For almost all courses they will be subject (especially for the many of the public universities) and grade requirements, plus evidence of your language proficiency in the language in which the course will be taught (see more details on this below). It is common for some universities to make conditional offers (based on achieving either an overall grade or within a specific subject).

[swissuniversities - swissuniversities](#) – can be used to check entry requirements; included here are A level & GCSE requirements [International Advanced Level + International GCSE \(copy 2\) - swissuniversities](#) & IB Diploma requirements [International Baccalaureate \(copy 1\) - swissuniversities](#)

It is important to understand the process of each individual institution and for the courses you are applying. It is likely that they will all have slightly different processes, fees and timescales (deadlines), with some requiring entrance tests.

For an insight into the admission system for public universities see: [Admission - study in switzerland+](#)

Deadline dates:

As covered above due to the individual / direct application process applications deadlines vary from university to university. The key is to explore options early and ensure you understand the application process and deadlines. All institutions are always happy to support perspective students and on their individual websites you will find contact details. Included here is a link to a list of public universities and deadlines, but this should only be used as quick reference and you must check with each university (note check you have the most up-to-date version): [Application Deadlines - study in switzerland+](#)

Remember your school will set its own deadlines, as they will want to check the application and are often required to write references which takes time.



**Additional Requirements:**

Demonstrating your proficiency in the language you will be taught in will be a requirement for all courses. This can be as simple as proving you have previously been taught in this language or it is your first language. Alternatively (and for some even if the above applies), you will need to either provide a certificate of proficiency or some universities offer their own assessments (not all so check with those you are applying to).

Fees:

At the Swiss public universities', tuition fees are (maybe) surprisingly low. International student fees are slightly higher than for those of Swiss Nationals but still remain relatively low with fees at the public universities for both EU/EEA and non-EU/EEA students usually between CHF500 and CHF 2,000 per semester (note most courses include 2 semesters in a year). [Tuition Fees - study in switzerland+](#) (explores public universities).

Other additional fees may include; application, registration and examination fees. Plus, and a key consideration for international students are the living costs in Switzerland as these are well above the world and European average. [Cost of Living - study in switzerland+](#)

The fees of the many private universities and Hospitality Schools are generally significantly higher and can be found on the individual websites. Fees vary between courses and location, plus be aware of the many scholarship opportunities / student loan options offered (again found on the individual institutions websites).

Visa requirements:

In order to be able to study in Switzerland you require a proof of acceptance from the higher education institution where you will be studying. Depending on your nationality (this is a lot simpler for EU/EEA nationals, plus check any individual country agreements, including UK citizens / passport holders) you will either apply for a residence permit in a Swiss canton once you arrive in the country (generally for EU/EEA nationals) or submit a visa application to the Swiss representation covering your country of residence (generally rest of the world, but do check any country agreements). Alongside your letter of acceptance / registration, you will also need to provide proof of funds. Full details can be found on the link below and the international admissions teams at the university you plan to attend are very well experienced and will support you through the process. [Studying in Switzerland Visa requirements](#)

Highest ranking universities in Switzerland:

Here we offer one league table, there are many others to explore. However, any decision about which university / institution to study at, should never be purely based on league tables – students should research options carefully to ensure they offer them what they want from the course and where they would wish to spend their time (See next steps below to support with this and remember the support offered in school).





Top 5: [ETH Zurich](#), [École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne - EPFL](#), [University of Zurich \(UZH\)](#), [University of Basel](#), [University of Bern \(unibe.ch\)](#), [University of Geneva](#). Also popular with our international students: [University of St.Gallen](#), [Webster University Geneva](#) & [Franklin University Switzerland](#).

Swiss Hospitality Schools:

It is also worth noting the variety of courses offered within these schools, many with a Business, Entrepreneurial focus (Switzerland has 7 of the top 10 according to the [QS World University Rankings for Hospitality and Leisure Management 2023](#) : [EHL Lausanne](#), [SHMS | Swiss Hotel Management School](#), [Glion](#), [Les Roches](#), [César Ritz Colleges](#)

Further information:

[Studying in Switzerland - swissuniversities](#)

[Study Programmes - study in switzerland+](#)

[Study in Switzerland: the ultimate guide for a Bachelor in 2023 \(bachelorsportal.com\)](#)

[Study a Bachelor's Degree in Switzerland \(educations.com\)](#)

[UniversityRankings.ch](#)

Research tips:

The Three R's Rule:

Is the information **Recent**? This is particularly important when applying to international universities as entry requirements, visa rules, finances, etc. generally change each year. Ensure you are reading the most up-to-date information. If in-doubt talk with the careers / university team in school.

Is it **Relevant**? Does it actually provide you with answers to the questions you have?

Is it **Reasoned**? Does it provide statements and back them up with facts or data that are useful for you as an individual?

Create an Action Plan: Try writing out a list of questions you want to find answers to (see below for some ideas of things you might want to know) and reject (for now) information that doesn't help answer them. Keep your research in one place, so you can refer to it later.

Information overload: This can be a problem when you first start your research. It can be a good idea at the start to select just two or three of the best sources and forget the rest. You can always come back for more as your thinking progresses.



**Next steps:**

Example questions you might like to find the answers to when exploring your options. We all have different priorities and reasons for studying a course so you are likely to have other questions.

- ❖ Find out about the course including course content, structure, options and assessment methods.
- ❖ What are the course requirements; subjects, grades required and anything else, such as additional entrance tests, work experience, etc. *Are predicted grades accepted or must you already know your final results?
- ❖ What is the application process; Is it multiple applications using one document (UCAS, Common Application), or individual university forms or a mix of both?
- ❖ Is there any additional documentation that needs completing and at what stage in the application process is this required (personal statement, motivational letter, CV, etc)?
- ❖ Do you have to provide proof of English language (or other) ability? * *Students who have studied in English / are native speakers can be exempt, but it is important to check with universities.*
- ❖ What are the application deadlines, including dates for any additional entrance tests?
- ❖ What are the costs; Tuition fees and accommodation/living costs, and finance/funding options.
- ❖ Is it possible to study in more than one country/gain work experience as part of the course?
- ❖ Logistics to and from home, how long will it take, how many flights etc?
- ❖ What do you know about the country; climate, culture, languages spoken etc?
- ❖ What are the work regulations, both during the course and after graduation?
- ❖ Are there any health requirements in advance, for instance some countries insist on certain vaccinations before an entry visa is issued?
- ❖ Are the qualifications you gain from the course recognised through-out the world / in the country you plan to work? If not, can these be converted?
- ❖ Do you need post graduate qualifications / specific work experience after completing your first degree to work in your chosen career?

