

## School and Education

Schools and education in Switzerland  
Compulsory schooling  
Post-compulsory education (secondary school II)  
Transitional options  
Higher education and university  
Recognition of diplomas and validation of experience  
Learning French

# Schools and education in Switzerland

Having a good education is important. Compulsory schooling gives children knowledge that will be useful in choosing their profession. After compulsory schooling, it is important to continue training, either through vocational or general training. A good education means you can find a good job.

## The school system and education in Switzerland

In Switzerland, education is divided into three stages:

1. Compulsory schooling: primary school and secondary school I
2. Compulsory schooling is followed by secondary school II:  
either initial vocational training (doing an apprenticeship)  
or general education (high school, specialised school)
3. To continue studies: universities of applied sciences (UAS), tier-one universities, universities of teacher education (UTE) and vocational education (for a federal professional diploma, an advanced federal diploma or a professional education institution (PEI).

The state (the confederation, the cantons and the municipalities) is responsible for education. The confederation, the cantons and municipalities each have different responsibilities. For this reason, there are differences in the school systems from one canton to another.

## Paying for tuition

Compulsory schooling and post-compulsory schooling (secondary school II) are free of charge.

Would you like to continue your education? Don't have a big salary?

The canton can offer you financial assistance: a study grant or a student loan. This aid is used to pay part of the education costs.

Are you a foreign national? You too can receive a scholarship, subject to certain conditions.

The scholarships section of the Service de la formation postobligatoire (Post-Compulsory Schooling Service (SFP)) provides information on scholarships.

## Advice on school and choosing a profession

The Centre d'orientation scolaire et professionnelle et de psychologie scolaire (Centre for Educational and Vocational Guidance and School Psychology (COSP)) provides you and your children with information. It supports and advises you through the various stages of school, as well choosing a profession, studies and a career.

**Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)**

[www.bonjour-jura.ch/en/school-and-education/schools-and-education-in-switzerland](http://www.bonjour-jura.ch/en/school-and-education/schools-and-education-in-switzerland)

# Compulsory schooling

Compulsory schooling provides children with a basic education to enable them to continue their studies. Public schools are free of charge.

## Levels of education: the different stages

In the Canton of Jura, compulsory schooling lasts 11 years. Children start school at the age of four by 31 July (born before and up to 31 July).

Compulsory schooling is divided into two stages:

- The primary level lasts eight years.

Pupils gradually develop skills in the following areas:  
languages, mathematics, science, arts, sport and living together.

- Secondary school (secondary I) lasts three years.

Depending on their abilities, pupils are guided towards different levels of education.  
They expand their knowledge.

In addition, they become more independent and prepare for vocational training.

## What about children with special needs or disabilities?

Children with special needs or disabilities are encouraged and supported throughout their schooling.

## What about children who speak a foreign language?

Children who do not speak French receive special assistance.

## Public/private schools

Public schools are free of charge. Boys and girls are in the same classes. Teaching is not based on religion.

The majority of children and young people attend compulsory schooling in public schools.

There is also a private school in the Canton of Jura: St-Charles in Porrentruy.

If you wish to enrol your children in a private school, you must pay the tuition fees yourself.

## **Enrolling your child in school**

Children up to 15 years of age by 31 July (born before and up to 31 July) attend compulsory school.

Have you moved to a new municipality in the Canton of Jura?

Is your child under 15 or 15 years old?

Are you arriving in the municipality after a move? To enrol your child in school, you must contact the school principal in your new municipality.

Is your young person over 15 years old?

You should contact the Service de la formation postobligatoire (Post-Compulsory Education Service). They will help them find training.

### **"Sport-Arts-Etudes (Sport, Arts, Studies)"**

From the age of 12, young people who are high-level athletes or artists can enrol in "Sport-Arts-Etudes (Sports, Arts, Studies (SAE)". Parents must submit a written request to the Service de l'enseignement (Teaching Service).

## **Rights and duties of parents**

Schooling is compulsory. You may have problems if your child does not go to school without an excuse or good reason.

Is your child sick? Are they unable to take part in lessons? Then you have to inform the school.

You also need to check that your child does their homework.

It is important to show your child that you are interested in the work they do at school.

It is important to support and encourage them.

The school gives you information on all the topics of your child's school life.

There are various ways it does this: a weekly notebook, school letters or meetings with parents.

Good cooperation between you and the teachers is important. That way, your child's schooling will go well.

## **Any questions? Need support?**

If you have any questions about the school, ask the teacher first.

If the teacher thinks your child needs something or has questions, they will also get in touch with you.

Do you have any particular difficulties or concerns?

You can ask the teacher. They will refer you to the relevant people.

You can also contact the school social worker or the Centre d'orientation scolaire et professionnelle et psychologie scolaire (Centre for Educational and Vocational Guidance and School Psychology (COSP)) directly.

**Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)**

[www.bonjour-jura.ch/en/school-and-education/compulsory-schooling](http://www.bonjour-jura.ch/en/school-and-education/compulsory-schooling)

## Post-compulsory education (secondary school II)

After compulsory schooling, young people continue their education in secondary schools, either in general or vocational training. Young people who then wish to study at a university of applied sciences must obtain a secondary school, vocational or specialised school baccalaureate.

### Initial vocational training (doing an apprenticeship)

After compulsory schooling, young people can choose to undergo initial vocational training (do an apprenticeship). This is basic training that allows you to learn a trade.

#### **Dual apprenticeship (company + school)**

During an apprenticeship, young people work in a company. They learn the practical knowledge of the profession. And they go to vocational school one or two days a week.

This type of training is called dual apprenticeship: one part takes place in a company and the other part at vocational school.

#### **Apprenticeship in a vocational school**

It is also possible to follow an apprenticeship in a school full-time, with internships in companies.

#### **Length of apprenticeship**

An apprenticeship lasts between two and four years. Young people obtain a Federal Vocational Certificate (FVC) or a Federal Vocational Diploma (FVD).

With an apprenticeship diploma, a young person can find a job.

They can also then pursue higher vocational training and later enter a university of applied sciences.

In the last year of compulsory schooling, young people have to look for an apprenticeship in a company themselves. Parents have to help young people.

The Centre d'orientation scolaire et professionnelle et de psychologie scolaire (Centre for Educational and Vocational Guidance and School Psychology (COSP)) provides advice and guidance to young people free of charge.

The MON APP' app helps young people find a job that interests them and identify an apprenticeship.

## **General education (continuing to study)**

After compulsory schooling, young people can also choose to continue school. They can go to high school or a specialised school.

### **High school**

High school lasts three years and young people obtain the baccalaureate. The baccalaureate allows students to continue their studies at a university or a university of applied sciences.

The cantonal high school in Porrentruy also offers bilingual German-French schooling for young people who wish to do so.

### **Specialised schools**

Specialised school lasts three years and young people obtain a Specialised School Diploma. After their diploma, young people can do an extra year to obtain a specialised baccalaureate. The specialised baccalaureate allows students to continue their studies at a university of applied sciences in their chosen field.

Finally, you can sit directly for the federal academic baccalaureate exams, without having to complete all of the schooling. You can prepare freely for the exams, following the curricula of a private school, or independently on a self-taught basis.

## **“Sport-Arts-Etudes” (“Sport-Arts-Studies”)**

From the age of 12, young people who are high-level athletes or artists can enrol in “Sport-Arts-Etudes (Sports, Arts, Studies (SAE)”. Parents must submit a written request to the Service de l'enseignement (Teaching Service).

## **Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)**

[www.bonjour-jura.ch/en/school-and-education/post-compulsory-education-secondar  
y-school-ii](http://www.bonjour-jura.ch/en/school-and-education/post-compulsory-education-secondar-y-school-ii)

## Transitional options

After compulsory schooling, some young people still do not know what training they want to do. Or sometimes they still need to improve their academic or French skills. Or they didn't find an apprenticeship.

Transitional options allow young people to find a solution over the course of a year. The Centre d'orientation scolaire et professionnelle et de psychologie scolaire (Centre for Educational and Vocational Guidance and School Psychology (COSP)) can provide young people with information and advice.

### 12th year

Sometimes young people need a 12th year in compulsory school to successfully complete the grade 11 curriculum and improve their academic results. Parents must submit a written request to the school before the end of February. The decision is taken by the Teaching Service.

#### 12th year in German

Young people can also do this 12th year in German, in a grade 11 class at a school in the Canton of Basel-Landschaft. This allows them to improve their German language skills. Young people must register with their school (in the Jura) before the end of March.

### The Raccordement (Connection) stream

The Raccordement (Connection) stream is intended for pupils who need to improve their academic knowledge before starting school or vocational training.

The programme involves five days of full-time school for one year.

To register, you must go through the MON APP' app

### Dual pre-apprenticeship (company + school)

Sometimes it is better to do a pre-apprenticeship before starting an apprenticeship.

This can help to improve academic skills or become familiar with the world of work.

Dual pre-apprenticeship is every week: 2-3 days in school and 2-3 days working in the company.

For young migrants, there is the **préapprentissage d'intégration (Integration Pre-Apprenticeship [PAI])** (93811). This programme helps young people improve their French, maths and other academic skills.

To register for the pre-apprenticeship, you must go through the MON APP' app.

## **Orientation year**

Sometimes young people have not yet found a company for their training. Or they have not yet chosen their future profession. They can follow an orientation year. During this year, they continue to go to school and do internships.

To register for an orientation year, you must go through the MON APP' app.

## **Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)**

[www.bonjour-jura.ch/en/school-and-education/transitional-options](http://www.bonjour-jura.ch/en/school-and-education/transitional-options)

# Higher education and university

There are two types of higher education institutions in Switzerland: universities, and universities of applied sciences (UAS). All universities follow the Bologna system (the European tertiary education system). It is also possible to pursue higher education in the form of continuing education.

## The higher education system

Among Swiss universities, a distinction is made between universities and universities of applied sciences. In universities of applied sciences, teaching is oriented towards practice, while in universities it is more theoretical and academic.

Both types have the same value. They follow the Bologna system (the European tertiary education system). At the end of their studies, students obtain a degree recognised throughout Europe: the Bachelor (approx. three years of study) and then the Master (approx. two years of study).

## Admission to a university of applied sciences

With a Swiss baccalaureate, admission to a university of applied sciences is guaranteed. Foreign school-leaving certificates are not recognised automatically.

You must enrol directly at the university in which you wish to study.

Admission requirements vary from one institution to another.

For example, some insist on people taking examinations or require internships.

In general, very good knowledge of French or German is required. This does not apply for courses held entirely in English.

The Centre d'orientation scolaire et professionnelle et de psychologie scolaire (Centre for Educational and Vocational Guidance and School Psychology (COSP)) provides free information on the various study opportunities offered by universities of applied sciences.

## Higher vocational education

In addition to the universities of applied sciences (UAS), there are also the professional education institutions (PEIs).

In these, professionals who hold a federal vocational diploma can obtain a PEI diploma.

This is at the same level as a UAS degree, but it is more practical and professionally oriented.

## **Continuing education**

Professionals can specialise and deepen their professional knowledge through ongoing training. They can obtain diplomas such as the federal professional diploma or the advanced federal diploma.

## **Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)**

[www.bonjour-jura.ch/en/school-and-education/higher-education-and-university](http://www.bonjour-jura.ch/en/school-and-education/higher-education-and-university)

# Recognition of diplomas and validation of experience

Foreign diplomas and school-leaving certificates are not always recognised in Switzerland. And for some professions, you need a diploma - it's compulsory. In some cases, it is possible to have your foreign diploma recognised. Is your foreign diploma not recognised? Or are you lacking a diploma? In these cases, you can have your experience validated. This means having your professional and personal experience recognised .

## Recognition of diplomas: for regulated professions

Do you have a foreign diploma?

Under certain conditions, you can apply for your diploma to be recognised. If your diploma is recognised, it can be said to be equivalent to a Swiss diploma or certificate of completion of studies.

For some professions (healthcare, education and law), official recognition of your foreign diploma is mandatory to be able to work in Switzerland. These professions are protected.

For example, doctors, nurses, teachers or lawyers.

To have a diploma recognised (going through the procedure for recognising your diploma) a fee is charged.

The reconnaissance.swiss/en website of the Secrétariat d'État à la formation, à la recherche et à l'innovation (SEFRI) (State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI)) explains the procedure to be followed, depending on the profession. It also forwards the contacts in the relevant departments.

## Certification of proficiency: for non-regulated professions

For most professions, official recognition is not mandatory to be able to work in Switzerland.

For example, for the following professions: cook, mechanic, computer scientist, graphic designer, adult trainer, etc.

For these professions, you can apply for a certificate of proficiency. This shows the value of your foreign diploma in the Swiss education system. It can also be useful when looking for a job.

The recognition.swiss website of the Secrétariat d'État à la formation, à la recherche et à l'innovation (SEFRI) (State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI)) provides useful information.

## **Validation of experience**

You don't have a diploma?

You can try to get your professional background, professional and personal experience recognised. All of this experience can be recognised as part of a professional diploma (FVD or FVC), or even a full diploma. This process is called validation of experience.

The Centre d'orientation scolaire et professionnelle (Centre for Educational and Vocational Guidance (COSP)) of the Canton of Jura will inform you about this. It will advise you on the process free of charge.

## **Retaking the certificate of completion of studies**

Do you have professional experience but not a recognised diploma or certificate of completion of studies? You can take the Swiss certificate of completion of vocational training.

To retake the certificate, the process depends on your education, work experience and age. In all cases, you must have a good knowledge of French (Level B1/B2).

For more information, contact the Centre d'orientation scolaire et professionnelle (Centre for Educational and Vocational Guidance (COSP)). It's free.

## **Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)**

[www.bonjour-jura.ch/en/school-and-education/recognition-of-diplomas-and-validation-of-experience](http://www.bonjour-jura.ch/en/school-and-education/recognition-of-diplomas-and-validation-of-experience)

# Learning French

Learning French is important to understand each other well, to find a job or training. It also helps to solve everyday problems.

## French courses in the Canton of Jura

The COMUNICA programme offers French courses for foreigners, from Beginner level (A1) to Advanced level (B2). These courses are inexpensive. The COMUNICA programme also provides courses for people who are not familiar with our alphabet or have difficulty reading or writing: literacy courses.

Some municipalities pay part of the registration fee.

The Animation and training centre for women and families (Centre d'Animation et de Formation pour Femmes et Familles) (CAFF) offers French courses for women, with a childcare service on site. These courses are inexpensive.

There are other French courses in the area.

The AJAM also offers courses in languages specifically for people coming from asylum

## What level of French?

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages – Learning, Teaching, Assessing (CEFR) is often used to determine a person's level of French.

This framework ranges from level A1 (beginner) to level C2 (perfect mastery).

Vocational training often requires a B1 or B2 level.

The fide test checks the level of French for everyday life in Switzerland. It tests the level of oral (spoken) and written language. The results are given in a "language passport". This passport can be used to look for a job, apply for a residence or settlement permit, or apply for Swiss nationality.

## **French and children**

Children who speak a foreign language should be in touch with French-speaking children as soon as possible. It is important that they learn French before going to school. The nurseries, kindergartens or special offers for parents and children are great for this.

Parents also have to use their own language a lot with their children. This is very important too.

For example: talking to children a lot, listening to them, telling them stories in their own language.

Schoolchildren can also attend classes in their own language. These courses are called: the language and culture of origin courses (LCO courses). These courses are usually organised by the embassy or consulate or an association from the home country.

Schools provide full information about LCO courses.

## **Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)**

[www.bonjour-jura.ch/en/school-and-education/learning-french](http://www.bonjour-jura.ch/en/school-and-education/learning-french)