

Work

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Access to the Job Market

Whether or not a person is granted permission to work or start a business in Switzerland may vary according to citizenship and reasons for entering Switzerland. All persons working in Switzerland must register with social insurance and pay taxes.

Work Permit

Granting a work permit is usually determined upon the granting of a residence permit. Generally, persons with residence permits can work in Switzerland. Depending on the nationality and the duration of the work, the employer or the worker applies for the permit. The following addresses will provide further information on the subject, including assistance for persons who do not yet live in Switzerland, yet would like to work here. Since 2019 recognized refugees (B permit) and temporarily admitted persons with or without refugee status (F permit) no longer require a special permit. However, the start and end of each employment must be reported to the canton using an official form (Meldeverfahren). The canton in which you work is responsible. This registration is free of charge. Asylum seekers (identity card N) still need a permit.

Owning a Business

Whether or not a person in Switzerland can start their own business may vary according to citizenship and permit. The process is simpler for persons from EU/EFTA-Countries as well as persons with a C permit. The canton's migration department informs migrants whether it is possible to start a business.

Illegal Work

It is illegal and punishable to work without having social insurance, a work permit, or without declaring income in the tax return. This is illegal work (Schwarzarbeit). Illegal work has consequences for both the employer and the employee involved. In addition, illegal workers are not insured in the case of an accident and are not paid a contribution to their pension. Persons who suspect that they have not been employed correctly should consult with a pro bono legal service (Rechtsberatungsstelle).

Young People

Generally young people who have reached the age of 14 can work. Simple tasks over short periods of time (e.g. summer jobs) are allowed before the age of 14. Parents and employers must ensure that young people are not overburdened. Special labour regulations apply to young people under the age of 18.

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

www.hallo-ar.ch/en/work/access-to-the-job-market

Finding a Job

The employment rate in Switzerland is high in comparison with other countries. Even so, those seeking work must meet high requirements. Certificates and degrees are of great importance. Nearly all positions require German language skills.

Qualifications

Professional certificates, degrees and professional training are important for most professions in Switzerland, as are job references provided by previous employers. Foreign degrees are not always recognized. Most positions require German language skills.

Finding a Job

Job offers are published in newspapers and on various websites. Private job agencies provide additional services. In Switzerland it is not uncommon to call a company and ask about open positions. This is possible even if the company has not listed an open position. Public regional employment agencies (RAV) offer support in finding a job. On-site computers and newspapers are provided and personnel is available to advise those seeking work.

Job Application

Applications are normally submitted in written form. An application should at least include a resume, a motivational letter, and if possible copies of certificates, degrees, and job references. If an employer takes an interest one is invited to a job interview (Vorstellungsgespräch). Various services offer free advice and support regarding the application process.

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

www.hallo-ar.ch/en/work/finding-a-job

Rights and Duties

Employees and employers have various rights and duties. There are laws regarding, for example, maximum working hours, holidays, and insurance.

Employment Contract

Normally employment contracts are in written form. Oral contracts are valid as well. The Swiss Code of Obligations (Obligationenrecht) is applicable. It includes minimum standards, ensuring that even persons without written contracts have rights and responsibilities.

Employees' Rights

Employees in Switzerland have various legal rights. The most important include:

- Employers are obligated to register their employees with the social insurance, provide a contract for accident insurance and cover part of the payments.
- All employees have a right to at least 4 weeks of paid holidays. This rule applies proportionately to persons who are paid by the hour or who work part-time.
- Hours worked per week may not exceed 50. In certain industries the upper limit is 45 hours.
- Employees have a right to a written work reference.
- Persons employed for more than three months are entitled to wages for a certain period of time in cases of illness or injury.
- Pregnant women and women who have recently given birth have special rights (Mutterschutz).

Wages

Switzerland does not enforce a minimum wage. However, many industries have collective agreements (GAV) which include a minimum wage. Women and men have the right to equal pay for equal work. The wage defined in the collective agreement is the gross pay. Employees will receive a net income from which the contribution to the social insurance has already been deducted (Sozialabzüge). In the case of persons with a residence permit B, an F or N permit, temporary visa L or a cross-border commuter permit G a withholding tax (Quellensteuer) will be directly deducted from their income.

Dismissal

When giving notice employers as well as employees must observe the time limits agreed upon in contract. A dismissal without notice is only possible in special cases. Requests for written explanations regarding a dismissal must be granted. Illness, an accident, pregnancy, or childbirth are causes for special protection against dismissal. Abusive dismissals can be challenged in court. If notice is given by the employee it can have consequences for the amount of support provided by unemployment insurance.

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

www.hallo-ar.ch/en/work/rights-and-duties

Unemployment

All employees are insured against unemployment. Generally, persons who become unemployed receive financial support over a certain period of time. Unemployed persons must contact the regional employment centre (RAV). The centre will help with finding employment.

Unemployment Insurance

Unemployment insurance (ALV) is a state institution and compulsory for all employees. The contributions are deducted directly from employees' monthly wages. The employer covers half of the contributions. Self-employed persons cannot receive unemployment insurance. Persons who become unemployed receive monthly compensation for loss of income (unemployment benefits, Arbeitslosengeld) from the unemployment fund. If, when, and how much money is paid depends on various factors. For example, duration of employment or reasons for unemployment.

How to Proceed in Unemployment

Persons who become unemployed must contact their community of residence as soon as possible. Ideally, this is done before the last day of work and no later than the first day of unemployment. At the same time, one must register with the responsible regional employment centre (RAV). The centre will describe further procedures.

Regional Employment Centre

The regional employment centre (RAV) helps persons quickly reenter the workforce. Counseling is compulsory if one is receiving unemployment benefits. RAV also offers classes or employment programmes. Some of these are compulsory. Persons who have never worked in Switzerland and are looking for a job can also contact RAV. However, they will not receive unemployment benefits.

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

www.hallo-ar.ch/en/work/unemployment

Recognition of Qualifications

Foreign qualifications are not always valid in Switzerland. Under certain circumstances, it is possible to have qualifications validated. This is a requirement for some professions.

Recognition

Persons with foreign qualifications can, under certain circumstances, have them validated in Switzerland. Validation confirms that the foreign qualification is the equivalent of the Swiss qualification. Regulated professions (e.g. healthcare professionals, teachers, etc.) require validation. Which agency is responsible for the validation process is dependent upon the profession or training. A fee is charged for the validation process. Provide information:

- The National Contact Point for Diploma Recognition
- The specialist office Heks MosaiQ Eastern Switzerland
- Career, study, and career path counseling

Determining the Level of Qualification

A validation process is not necessary for unregulated professions. For these professions it is possible to request that the level of qualification be determined (Niveaubestätigung). This process determines the status of a foreign diploma relative to the Swiss education system. Such a determination can be helpful in finding employment. Information on level confirmation is provided by the National Contact Point for Diploma Recognition or by career, study, and career path counseling.

Professional Qualification Later in Life

Adults with professional experience who do not have a recognised qualification can still obtain a Swiss qualification through vocational education and training or professional education and training. The process varies according to previous training, experience, and age. Good German language skills are an essential prerequisite (Level B1/B2 CEFR). Interested individuals can get information and advice at the integration information office INFI.. Obtaining a professional qualification betters one's position in the job market and grants access to continued education.

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

www.hallo-ar.ch/en/work/recognition-of-qualifications-2