

LIVING AND WORKING IN SWITZERLAND



+ WORKING IN SWITZERLAND +

ECONOMY

Despite its limited land surface and lack of raw materials, Switzerland is an important industrial nation and centre for financial services. As a result of stable economic and political conditions, many international concerns have their headquarters in Switzerland. Nevertheless, Switzerland remains largely dependent on the importation of raw materials, sources of energy, semi-finished products and foodstuffs.

LOOKING FOR EMPLOYMENT IN SWITZERLAND

Most vacancies are not advertised in the newspapers or on the Internet. Many jobs are filled within the company or offered to persons who contact the enterprise directly.

Many companies publish vacant positions on their own website. You can find these via the usual job search browsers. Carefully choose the company you are interested in and contact those that are successful. The addresses of most Swiss companies are listed on

the website of their professional associations under the heading «Members». Thus, for example: economie-suisse (Federation of Swiss enterprises), Swissmem (Mechanical and engineering industries), Federation of the Swiss Watch Industry (FH), Chemie Pharma Schweiz (SGCI), Gastro Suisse (Hotel and restaurant federation) etc.

SITUATIONS VACANT IN NEWSPAPERS AND ON THE INTERNET

Vacancies are also published in the supplements of larger daily papers. The best-known advertisers are the Stellefant (Basler Zeitung), Stellenmarkt (Bund and Berner Zeitung), 24 Emplois (24 heures), Pages emploi (Le Temps), Stellen-Anzeiger, Alpha (Tages-Anzeiger and SonntagsZeitung) as well as NZZexecutive (Neue Zürcher Zeitung) and Corriere del Ticino (newspaper for Ticino).



Online newspapers:
www.zeitung.ch
www.onlinenewspapers.com

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EMPLOYMENT OFFICES

Public employment offices in Switzerland are overseen at national level by the Labour Directorate at the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). Responsibility for job placement is, however, organised in the cantons by the RAV (Regional Employment Centres). These centres are responsible for supporting unemployed persons as well as EU nationals in their search for a new job.



Regional Employment Centres RAV:
www.jobarea.ch > About us

You can also register at one of the many private employment agencies or temporary employment offices. Under the following address you can find a list of the companies which are licensed to perform these services:



List of private
employment agencies:
www.jobarea.ch

The EURES network (European Employment Services) is a facility set up by the EU which pursues the objective of promoting professional mobility within the European Economic Area. Its online database contains thousands of vacancies, including positions in Switzerland. Just put your CV online and you will be visited by a host of employers.



EURES for job seekers:
www.ec.europa.eu/eures/
www.eures.ch

APPLICATION

In Switzerland a complete application file generally contains a covering letter, your curriculum vitae and copies of all your testimonials and certificates. All the documents must be written in one of the national languages (German, French or Italian). Under certain circumstances, international concerns also accept applications in English. To ensure that your application catches the company's attention, you should take great care with the presentation of your documents.



«Besides many other aspects, Switzerland also has good working conditions.»

Sandra Brandhuber, healthcare worker, Austria

The aim of the covering letter is to convince the recipient that you are the ideal candidate for the vacant post. You should therefore formulate your interest as briefly and concisely as possible. Only if your letter is informative and convincing, will you arouse the interest of the company in your person. But don't forget to add a personal touch! Don't be afraid of emphasising your assets and your expectations in the position. If you do not exactly match the profile of the job, point this out in a positive way.

Your letter should not exceed a type-written A4 sheet (a covering letter is to only be written by hand at the express wish of the employer). Finally, pay attention to correct grammar and spelling.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Simple, short and precise! A CV takes up a maximum of two A4 pages and should – written in tabular form – contain the following details:

- name and first name(s), address, telephone number, age, nationality

- professional background, for young persons also job experience during vocational training
- vocational training and education (school, studies, profession)
- knowledge of languages, computer skills, specialised knowledge
- special interests and hobbies

Further information and documentation:



Europass:
europass.cedefop.europa.eu



How to make a correct
job application:
www.jobarea.ch

> Downloads and forms > Brochures

JOB INTERVIEW

Prepare your interview thoroughly and think about your strengths and weaknesses as you'll have to give some concrete examples. Rehearse the initial interview – the first impression counts. What you wear is also important as it

shows how you'll look at work. Wear the type of clothes that are customary in the company and in your profession. If you don't know the relevant attire, go for a rather classical style. Make enquiries about the company (market, current situation, competition, etc.): you must be able to ask the right questions. You will also have to answer questions about your social competence and personal skills. Find out the wage conditions in the branch or professional sector (see next page).

RECOGNITION OF DIPLOMAS

In Switzerland employers attach great importance to diplomas and testimonials. The Swiss Federal Office for Education and Technology (OPET) assesses professional diplomas and issues equivalency certificates.

Federal Office for Education and
Technology (OPET):
www.bbt.admin.ch
Info@bbt.admin.ch

Rectors' Conference of the Swiss
Universities CRUS:
www.crus.ch

Please note that the recognition of diplomas only applies to regulated professions. Considered as regulated professions are those for the exercise of which a diploma, certificate or certificate of professional competence is required.

EU diplomas in Switzerland:
www.europa.admin.ch
> Services > Publications

WORKING CONDITIONS

Switzerland is known for its good working conditions. This does not, however, apply to all branches and professions. Find out more about this aspect.



«I like working in Switzerland because the people are so nice and helpful.»

Ingrid Schübbe-Birk, laboratory assistant, Germany

In certain branches there are General Labour Agreements (GLAs). A GLA is a written convention between one or more employers or their employers' associations and trade unions. It contains provisions on relations between employers and employees as well as provisions which are directed at the contracting parties of the GLA.

EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT

On the basis of the individual employment contract, the employee undertakes, for a definite or indefinite period, to perform work in the service of the employer. Conversely, the employer engages to pay a salary which is calculated according to periods of time (time wage) or the work carried out (piece wage). There are also individual employment contracts in which the employee undertakes to work regularly in the service of the employer by the hour, half day or day (part-time work). From the legal aspect, the individual employment contract is not required to have a particular form.

It is accordingly also possible to conclude an employment contract orally. For practical reasons, however, you are recommended to set down the employment contract in writing.

WORKING HOURS

Statutory maximum working hours for employees in industrial businesses, for office staff, technical personnel and other employees, including sales persons in large retail stores, amount to 45 hours per week. For all other salaried employees the upper limit lies at 50 hours.

Note: For temporary work at night as well as on Sundays and public holidays, there is a right to a special compensation.

An employment contract should contain the following details:

- Names of the two contracting parties
- Date contract commences
- Type of work to be done (poss. additional terms of reference, description of function, etc.)
- Working hours (estimated working hours/maximum working hours and, if relevant, special cases such as night work, Sunday work, etc.)
- trial period (max. three months)
- Period of dismissal
- Holidays
- Salary (total salary, deductions, if relevant, allowances, 13th month gratification, bonuses, continued payment of salary in the event of illness)
- Maternity leave
- Vocational third-party insurance
- Pension funds

The statutory basis applies in the case of details that are not regulated by the contract.

HOLIDAYS

The entitlement to holidays is a basic right which must be granted to all employees in each year of service. The statutory stipulated annual minimum length is as follows: five weeks for employees and apprentices up to their completed 20th year; thereafter, four weeks; from the 50th year, 5 weeks and from the 60th year, 6 weeks of holiday per year.



SECO brochures:

www.seco.admin.ch

> Documentation > Publications
and forms > Brochures

WAGES

Wage levels vary greatly from one economic branch and region to another. In Switzerland there is no statutory minimum wage. However, certain GLAs foresee minimum wages in certain branches, for example in hotels and restaurants.

Some GLAs may foresee higher wages, lower weekly working hours, longer holidays or a higher employer's contribution to vocational provision. Other GLAs are only valid in certain cantons. Before the initial interview, you can find out more about current wage conditions by contacting the trade union responsible for your branch.

Your salary is mostly paid into an account. For this you must have a bank or a post-office account in Switzerland.



Wage calculator:

www.lohnrechner.bfs.admin.ch

www.entsendung.ch

www.lohnrechner.ch

SOCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

If a certain salary is agreed upon in the employment contract, this will be a gross amount from which the social contributions are deducted. These deductions consist of contributions to:

- Old-Age and Survivors' Insurance (OASI), Disability Insurance (DI) and Income Loss Insurance: 5.05% of salary (without ceiling)
- Unemployment Insurance (UI): 1% of salary (up to max. CHF 126,000.– per year)
- Occupational pension provision: approx. 7% of regular salary, depending on the age of the insured persons and the pension scheme
- Non-occupational accident insurance: between 0.7 and 3.4% of salary (ceiling CHF 126,000.– per year), depending on the branch

We should point out that the employer pays contributions amounting to a maximum of the same level as you pay yourself to the above-mentioned social insurance institutions – with the exception of the non-occupational accident insurance.

Note: The contributions to the compulsory health insurance do not make up part of the social deductions in Switzerland.

Important addresses

State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)

Labour Directorate
Effingerstrasse 31
3003 Berne/Switzerland
eures@jobarea.ch
www.job-area.ch
www.eures.ch

Federal Office for Migration (FOM)
Emigration and Trainees
Quellenweg 6
3003 Berne-Wabern/Switzerland
euresinfo@bfm.admin.ch
www.bfm.admin.ch



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

«I love this multi-cultural country with its exceptionally high quality of life.»

Ted Smith, engineer, Netherlands