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# Professional prospects with an apprenticeship

Information for young people and young adults with protection status S

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**Education in Switzerland:** Many young people from Ukraine had to change their original education plans due to the war and their flight to Switzerland. They are in Switzerland for the foreseeable future. To this effect, it is important that they can continue their education without interruption if possible and, if necessary, complete their training here in Switzerland. The Swiss education system offers many opportunities to acquire professional skills. These form a solid basis for their professional future, both when they return to Ukraine and when they stay in Switzerland for a longer period of time.

**Differences in education systems between Ukraine and Switzerland:** In Ukraine, upper secondary education (старша школа), which most young people complete, lasts two years. Many then go on to study at the tertiary level. In Switzerland, upper secondary education usually takes longer. There are different educational pathways here. At upper secondary level, two out of three young people in Switzerland complete an apprenticeship.

**What is an apprenticeship?** The apprenticeship (basic vocational training) is one of Switzerland's success models. In an apprenticeship, you learn the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out a profession. The apprentices work in the company for a few days during the week and attend vocational school on the other days (dual vocational education and training). What is learned is applied directly. A salary is paid during the apprenticeship (the apprentice wage represents several hundred francs per month). For certain professions, there are also full-time schools that enable the completion of an EFZ.

**Career prospects:** The apprenticeship leads to a recognised qualification (Federal Vocational Certificate (EBA), Federal Certificate of Proficiency (EFZ)). It also opens up a wide range of prospects for further specialist training, including at tertiary level, and thus provides a solid foundation for a professional career.

**Is an apprenticeship the right training for you?** Many successful professional careers in Switzerland begin with an apprenticeship - it is the main upper secondary education in this country. An apprenticeship offers a practical and earlier start to a professional career than studying at tertiary level, where access to the labor market takes a little longer. There are around 250 occupations to choose from for an apprenticeship. The apprenticeship is characterised by a combination of practical training in a company that hosts the apprenticeship and instruction in a vocational school (vocational and general education subjects) and provides a solid foundation for entry into the labor market.



Switzerland also has other upper-secondary education programmes, such as specialised secondary schools. However, for people who do not speak any of the Swiss national languages, the requirements for language skills are high, and training takes place exclusively at school. This also applies to education at tertiary level (universities/ ETH, universities of applied sciences). If, for example, the knowledge of a national language is not yet sufficient or a vocational orientation is required, an (integration) pre-apprenticeship or another preparatory offer provides a good start. These programmes usually enable young people to acquire the necessary skills within a year so that they can then start an apprenticeship.

***Apprenticeship search and counselling services:*** In order to find out which apprenticeship in which occupational field corresponds to one's own wishes and also corresponds to one's own abilities, it is best to turn to a vocational and career guidance center (BIZ). Documentation and specialists help with the choice of occupation. The career counselling center also gives advice on how to go about looking for an apprenticeship.

In order for apprentices to find a suitable company, it is common for them to undergo a trial period of a few days in a company. As a rule, the apprentice applies to and tries out several companies before finding the right fit. If they agree, they sign an apprenticeship contract.

[More information can be found here.](#)