

## **Information for International Students on Entry and Visa Requirements**

### **General Information/Applying for a Visa**

The Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) has an information page regarding entry into and residence in Switzerland, including visa requirements: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/fdfa/entry-switzerland-residence.html>

To find out more about Switzerland's visa requirements, checklists concerning necessary documents, the contact details of your local embassy, etc., select your home country in the drop-down box on the left.

Please be aware that it is important to include all required documents with your visa application. Missing documents can cause a delay of several weeks.

### **Evidence of Sufficient Financial Means**

There are various requirements that must be met to obtain a visa. One of them is that you must produce evidence that you can finance your stay in Switzerland. The Canton of Zurich Migration Office requires confirmation from a bank domiciled in Switzerland that at the beginning of your stay and at the start of every extension of your visa you have funds available to you amounting to CHF 21,000. (For a list of banks that are accepted by the Swiss authorities, please click here: [FINMA-approved banks.](#)) The account must be in your name and the account balance must be stated in Swiss francs, euros, or US dollars, either on the bank statement or in an additional letter from the bank.

An alternative is to submit a so-called "guarantee declaration". This means that a solvent resident of Switzerland (Swiss citizen or foreigner with a B or C permit) guarantees to cover your living expenses up to CHF 21,000, any expenses incurred through accidents and illness, and your return trip. The appropriate form (*Verpflichtung*) will be sent to your home address by the Migration Office of the Canton of Zurich once they have received your visa application.

### **Employment in the Canton of Zurich**

During the semester, you are allowed to take up paid employment of no more than 15 hours per week. However, your employer will have to apply for your work permit at the cantonal Office of Economy and Labour ([Amt für Wirtschaft und Arbeit](#)) if you come from a non-EU/EFTA country. This is only possible once you have received your residence permit and after you have lived in Switzerland for at least six months.

Finding a job directly after graduation in a company based in Switzerland is generally possible but often challenging because admission of third-state nationals to the Swiss labor market is only granted if it is in the interests of Switzerland and the Swiss economy as a whole (Art. 18 and Art. 19 FNIA). In each case, the prevailing labor market situation, long-term economic growth, and the ability of the foreign national to integrate are taken into account. Applicants must explain and document why their admission is in the overall economic interest. More information can be found [here](#).

## Frequently asked Questions

*What are the fees for a Master's program at ZHAW?*

For an overview of the costs, please click here: [Fees and costs](#)

*What living expenses do I have to expect during my stay in Switzerland?*

You will find an overview of the living expenses based on the experience of former students here: [Cost of living](#)

*I'm not sure if I need a visa. Where can I check?*

On the website of the State Secretariat for Migration you will find an alphabetical list of countries:

[List of countries](#)

Click on the first letter of your country. This list is always up to date and provides reliable information on whether you need a visa for a stay of more than 90 days.

*Can I enter Switzerland with a tourist visa and then obtain a residence permit?*

No, that is impossible. Please note that it is illegal to start your studies on a tourist visa.

*I cannot provide financial proof by means of a bank statement, but I have relatives or acquaintances in Switzerland who can vouch for me. How can I obtain the necessary form?*

The form will be sent to you by the Migration Office of the Canton of Zurich if you include no or insufficient financial proof with your visa application.

*I do not have an account with sufficient funds. Can I enclose a bank statement for an account held by my parents?*

No, this will not be not accepted. You must be the account holder. A joint account held by you and a parent can be accepted if both your names are mentioned as account holders. Most students have to open a new account in their home country in order to meet the requirements of the Zurich Migration Office.

*I have received my visa, but it is only valid for three months. Is that correct?*

Yes, the visa will only entitle you to enter Switzerland. Within two weeks of entering Switzerland, you must therefore apply for a residence permit at the local resident's registration office. This is normally valid for one year and can be extended if your studies take longer. When you renew your residence permit, you must provide proof of your financial status.

*Is it possible for my visa application to be rejected?*

Please note that there is no guarantee that you will be granted a visa. The decision is at the sole discretion of the responsible migration office and is taken on a case-by-case basis. Visas of students who are older than 30 years are usually refused (only in well-founded exceptional cases may such an application be granted). The legal basis for this can be found [here](#) (*Migrationsamt des Kantons Zürich -> Aus- und Weiterbildung aus Drittstaaten* – available only in German). Visa applications from students who already have a degree at the desired level may also be rejected.

*Following completion of a Master's program, is there a specific time frame in which non-EU/EFTA nationals can look for employment in Switzerland?*

After successful completion of the Master's program (i.e., after completing the final exams), you can apply for an extension of your stay for another six months (maximum period of extension).

*Please note: The information given on this document is for information purposes only and holds no guarantee for complete accuracy. The regulations on which this information is based may have changed since this document was last reviewed. For legally binding information, please consult the website of the Swiss Federal Office for Migration or contact the Swiss embassy in your country of origin.*