



Vocational Education and Training / Middle School

Following compulsory education most young people choose to attend vocational education and training. In general, persons wishing to study at a university must obtain a diploma from a middle school. This is also possible through vocational education and training.

Importance of Education

A good education and professional life are important. Following compulsory education young people have various options to choose from to prepare themselves for professional life (secondary level II). Finding a good position without further education is difficult. The vocational guidance and information centers (BIZ | OP) advise young people and parents free of charge on questions of education and training. The responsible office of the cantonal administration is the Secondary School and Vocational Training Office (Mittelschul- und Berufsbildungsamt | Office des écoles moyennes et de la formation professionnelle).

Vocational Education and Training

Following compulsory education most young people choose to attend vocational education and training (apprenticeship). An apprenticeship involves young people acquiring the practical skills required for a profession through a work environment while also attending a professional school. There are more than 250 different professions to choose from. An apprenticeship requires between 2 and 4 years for completion. Young people must independently apply for an apprenticeship with a firm. They should begin searching for a position during the last two years of compulsory school. Schools help young people in this process, but parents' support is necessary. Vocational guidance and information centers (BIZ | OP) provide young people with various offerings and advise them free of charge. Young people who complete a vocational apprenticeship can also obtain a vocational baccalaureate, either during their basic vocational training or afterwards. The vocational baccalaureate gives access to a university of applied sciences. For many professions in Switzerland, it is not necessary to absolve the gymnasium and study at a university.



Middle School

Middle schools (Mittelschulen | Ecoles moyennes) offer a broad general education. These schools prepare students for an academic education at universities or universities of applied sciences (Fachhochschulen | Hautes écoles spécialisées). There are middle schools through which students earn a university preparatory diploma and there are middle schools where students earn a specialized or vocational diploma. The gymnasium baccalaureate grants direct access to universities. The specialized or vocational diploma grants direct access to universities of applied sciences. These are open to students with a gymnasium baccalaureate as well. Specialized or vocational diploma students may attend universities (by passing an exam). In some cases, additional conditions apply.

Bridge Programs

Bridge programs (Brückenangebote | Solutions transitoires) are an interim solution following compulsory schooling. They are aimed at young people who have not yet found an apprenticeship or who would like to better prepare themselves for an apprenticeship or middle school. Young people who arrive after compulsory schooling also have access to bridge opportunities. The focus is on entry into the labor market. A bridge program helps young people find an internship or apprenticeship. Interested persons should contact the office for bridge opportunities for Canton Bern or the career counseling and information centers (BIZ | OP).

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

www.hallo-bern.ch/en/school-and-education/vocational-education-and-training--middle-school