

Education System

The Swiss education system is outstanding in that it allows for continued personal advancement. Vocational training is highly valued. It a the basis for further training and for higher education.

Structure / Authorities

In Switzerland there are three consecutive levels of education:

- Compulsory education (public school: Kindergarten, primary school und secondary level I)
- Vocational education and training, or middle school (secondary level II)
- Universities of applied sciences / universities, and professional education and training (tertiary).

The state is responsible for all three levels and responsibilities are shared by the federation, cantons, and communities. For this reason schools and school systems may vary according to canton. There are also private kindergartens and schools. Private instruction is possible under certain circumstances

Compulsory Education

There is 11 years of compulsory education in Canton Bern. It usually begins when the child is 4 years old. Parents can be fined if their children are absent from school without notification or reason. Newly arrived young people up to the age of 16 are required to attend school. They have the right to enter compulsory school even during the current school year. There are small differences between the French and German speaking parts of the canton. More information about kindergarten and school attendance can be obtained from the municipality of residence or on the school's website.

Education Following Compulsory Education

The far majority of young people continue their studies following compulsory education. There are many options available. The best place to get information is at the vocational guidance and information centers (BIZ |OP). Vocational education and training (Berufslehre |Apprentissage) is the most frequent choice. Vocational education allows future access to professional education and training. Persons who receive a vocational diploma are later able to attend a university of applied science. Approximately 20 percent of young people receive a gymnasium baccalaureate granting them direct access to universities.





Scholarships

Scholarships allow persons with little means to go to school or to obtain professional training. Scholarships provide financial support for education following compulsory education. Foreign residents of Canton Bern might also be eligible for scholarships depending on the student's or parents' citizenship and type of permit. Further information is available from. For further information, please contact the educational grants department of the cantonal administration.

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

www.hallo-bern.ch/en/school-and-education/education-system