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Three steps to a successful education

Starting an education – whether an apprenticeship or a university degree course – always involves great change and presents challenges. Young Swiss Abroad coming to Switzerland for their education should also be well prepared for this eventuality. Here are three key questions and steps for ensuring your education is a successful and enjoyable experience.

Which educational path should I choose?

Many sources of information exist but much often still remains unclear. Expectations are not met, causing disappointment. The advice of teachers, parents and friends is, of course, valuable. Specific information can be found on the websites of the educational institutions or “Berufsberatung” (careers advice) at www.berufsberatung.ch. www.educationsuisse.ch provides professional advice on career opportunities and study, specifically for young Swiss people abroad, via Skype or at its premises in Berne.

How will my education be financed?

Parents are generally responsible for funding their children’s education in Switzerland. However, applications can be made for cantonal grants in the case of low-income households. Responsibility lies with the home canton as far as young Swiss Abroad are concerned. Every canton has its own legislation and provisions. It is therefore important to find out about grant entitlements and deadlines, etc. at an early stage. It is also worth finding out whether sup-

port for education in Switzerland is provided in the country where the parents live. Universities and private foundations also sometimes provide grants.

Where will I live in Switzerland?

There are many options including student halls of residence, shared accommodation with other students, or staying with relatives or host families. The Springboard project – organised jointly by [educationsuisse](http://www.educationsuisse.ch) and the OSA’s Youth Service – enables young Swiss Abroad aged over 18 to live with host families for between three and six months at the start of their education in Switzerland.

As soon as these three key questions have been addressed, nothing should stand in the way of starting the first year of an apprenticeship or the first semester at a university of applied sciences or a traditional university.

For further information or if you have questions concerning education in Switzerland, please contact the [educationsuisse](http://www.educationsuisse.ch) team: info@educationsuisse.ch.

RUTH VON GUNTEN, EDUCATIONSUISSE



www.educationsuisse.ch / www.berufsberatung.ch

Camp for Swiss children abroad with disabilities

The Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad would like to offer Swiss children abroad with disabilities (physical or mental) the opportunity to discover Switzerland, their native country. Our aim with this camp will be to focus on the children’s individual capabilities and interests. We also attach great importance to ensuring parental concerns are taken into account.



Before organising such a camp, we would like to assess the demand for it amongst the Swiss Abroad. We therefore ask that parents, grandparents, relatives and friends contact us by email or telephone by September 2016.

We would greatly appreciate your feedback so that together we can ensure children with disabilities enjoy an unforgettable visit to Switzerland.

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OSA advice

What is the procedure for obtaining recognition from the OSA for a Swiss society abroad?

The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) is a private foundation. It aims to encourage ties between the Swiss Abroad themselves as well as with Switzerland, to represent their interests in Switzerland and to provide them with a wide range of services (information, legal advice, offers for young people, etc.).

The OSA is supported by its recognised Swiss societies abroad. To obtain recognition from the OSA, a Swiss society must meet all the following requirements:

- The purpose of the society is to encourage ties between the Swiss Abroad themselves as well as with their homeland.
- Over 50 % of the active members are Swiss citizens.
- The majority of the board members are Swiss citizens.
- The steering committee is led by a Swiss citizen.
- At least seven Swiss citizens must belong to the society.
- The society convenes a members' meeting at least once a year and has an executive board that is re-elected periodically.
- The society is affiliated to the umbrella organisation responsible for its country if one exists (France, Germany, Italy, UK, Spain-Portugal, Austria-Liechtenstein-Slovenia, Netherlands, Canada, Argentina).
- The society expressly undertakes to notify the OSA if any one of the requirements is no longer met.

The societies recognised by the OSA can take part in the election of delegates to the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA). The CSA is made up of representatives of the Swiss communities abroad as well as members from Switzerland (for example, federal MPs representing the institutions associated with the Swiss Abroad). It meets twice a year to discuss matters affecting the Swiss Abroad. The Council of the Swiss Abroad is called the "Parliament of the Fifth Switzerland" in the media. The Swiss societies recognised by the OSA therefore make a direct contribution to policy on the Swiss Abroad.

Societies which do not meet all the requirements set out above may be recognised as associate societies. They cannot take part in the election of their country's delegates to the CSA but otherwise have the same rights and obligations as the societies fully recognised by the OSA.

Recognition by the OSA means that the societies become part of the global network of societies and institutions of the Swiss Abroad. They automatically receive communications and newsletters from the OSA and are listed on the www.swisscommunity.org website, the social platform of the Swiss Abroad. They also lend the OSA – and therefore the Swiss Abroad, too – more weight in representing the interests of the Swiss Abroad.

Societies interested in obtaining OSA recognition can complete the application form. This can be found on the OSA's website: www.aso.ch > About ourselves > Swiss Societies abroad > Recognition of a Swiss society by OSA.

OSA LEGAL DEPARTMENT

Youth Service offers

Anniversary camp marking 100 years of the OSA (22.7 to 7.8.2016)

Are you interested in Swiss history, politics and culture? Then this is the right camp for you! There are still a few places available for the "culture, history and politics" anniversary camp. The journey of discovery will last for two weeks, from 22 July to 7 August, and take you from Estavayer-le-Lac over the Jura to Berne. En route, you'll discover more about the cultural diversity of your second homeland. Sign up now!

Language courses in German (8.8 to 19.8.2016) and French (22.7 to 7.8.2016)

Would you like to learn a national language? Three to four language lessons take place in the mornings, while a varied fringe programme is organised for the afternoons. If you would prefer to focus solely on language learning, you can take an intensive course (eight hours a day). You will live with a host family during your stay.

- French course in Biel (22.7 to 7.8.2016)
- German course in Zurich (8.8 to 19.8.2016)

Discover Switzerland (available throughout the year)

Would you like to travel around Switzerland on your own? Our "Discover Switzerland" offer presents a great opportunity to do so. You will stay with a Swiss host family for one to two weeks. We would be pleased to put together a diverse programme of day trips in line with your requirements. The Swiss Transfer Pass will allow you to move freely around Switzerland.

Information and registration: www.swisscommunity.org or www.aso.ch. Or send an email to: youth@aso.ch.

Concerns over insurance for the Swiss Abroad

The Council of the Swiss Abroad met in Brunnen on Lake Lucerne on 16 April. The main issues discussed at the meeting were voluntary old-age and survivors' insurance (AHV) and health insurance for the Swiss Abroad. The 25th anniversary of the Area for the Swiss Abroad was also celebrated in Brunnen.

MARKO LEHTINEN

There were 67 members of the Council of the Swiss Abroad eligible to vote present at the Hotel Waldstätterhof in Brunnen when Remo Gysin, the new President of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, opened the meeting.

The delegates elected Isabelle Moret, a National Councillor from the canton of Vaud, to the Council and the OSA's Executive Board. Davide Wüthrich was also elected to the Council of the Swiss Abroad. He is President of the Youth Parliament of the Swiss Abroad and lives in Italy. Two new members were also elected to the "Swiss Review" editorial committee, Claudia Iseli and Gaëlle Courtens.

The following societies were granted recognition by the Council of the Swiss Abroad: Asociación Suiza de Beneficencia de Madrid, Swiss Canadian Chamber of Commerce, Schweizerklub Südschweden and Comunidad Suizo Boliviana.

Contribution shortfalls upon returning

In addition to the statutory part of the meeting, the delegates addressed the issue of social insurance for the Swiss Abroad. This is the problem area of old-age and survivors' insurance (AHV) – anyone who leaves Switzerland withdraws from mandatory in-



surance. People not insured abroad face contribution shortfalls when they return to Switzerland. However, voluntary admittance to social insurance schemes is not always possible. The main problem concerning health insurance schemes is that anyone residing abroad is not covered by mandatory insurance under the Swiss health insurance schemes. So what next? Questions concerning these issues were answered by Jürg Brechbühl from the Federal Social Insurance Office, Patrick Schmied of the Central Compensation Office and Oliver Peters of the Federal Office of Public

President of the Swiss Confederation Schneider-Ammann visited the OSA in Brunnen.

Photo: Ariane Roulet

Health. The Swiss banks were again a talking point in the discussion forum. The Swiss Abroad have difficulty in opening bank accounts and obtaining credit cards in their native country. They also often pay higher charges.

It was not only the meeting of the Council of the Swiss Abroad that took place in Brunnen as the 25th anniversary of the Area for the Swiss Abroad was also celebrated. The Area for the Swiss Abroad Foundation celebrated the anniversary in the presence of the President of the Swiss Confederation Johann Schneider-Ammann. A poster exhibition also took place on the site.

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