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Young people with protection status S can do an apprenticeship and complete it in Switzerland

Information for companies who offer apprenticeships in Switzerland

Fleeing to Switzerland: Since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, more than 75,000 people have received protection in Switzerland. Among them are around 5,000 young people. Due to the war and their flight, they have lost their prospects for post-compulsory education in Ukraine.

Well educated: Young people with protection status S have completed compulsory schooling in Ukraine and have acquired good academic skills there. Since they have arrived in Switzerland, a large number of these young people have taken part in bridge programmes, language courses and other educational programmes. Many of them are now also competent in one of the national languages, which means that by the start of the 2023/2024 academic year, they will be able to consider a preparatory VET programme (e.g. a bridge programme or a pre-apprenticeship integration programme) or, if they have sufficient skills and are interested, a VET programme directly.

Young people with S status in a preparatory programme or an apprenticeship (сmapуa шкoлa): Protection seekers with S status have access to vocational guidance and are allowed to participate in trial apprenticeships. They can also start a preparatory programme or a basic vocational training (EFZ, EBA) or conclude an apprenticeship contract. Before starting a VET programme, they need a work permit from the cantonal labour market authority.

Opportunity for young Ukrainians and Swiss companies hosting apprenticeships Two out of three young people in Switzerland complete a VET programme. Vocational education and training is the most popular type of upper-secondary education in Switzerland. In Ukraine, however, this type of education is not as common. The Confederation, cantons, municipalities and their partners therefore provide targeted information to young Ukrainians and their parents about the opportunities offered by VET. Various sectors and companies are facing the challenge of filling their apprenticeship positions. For them, accepting apprentices with protection status S can be an opportunity. If young people do not yet have the necessary language or other skills, a preparatory course may be appropriate.

Remaining in Switzerland until completion of the apprenticeship is possible: The S protection status allows young people to stay in Switzerland until it is revoked by the Federal Council. However, companies that host apprenticeships need to know that the apprentice will be able to stay until the end of the contract. Should the protection status for young people be revoked during their apprenticeship, the deadline for apprentices to leave the country can be extended



until they have completed their VET programme (EFZ, EBA). In this case, the apprentice and the company hosting the apprentice must submit an application to the SEM confirming the continuation of the apprenticeship contract. The SEM then decides, on a case-by-case basis and after consultation with the cantonal VET authorities, on the change of the departure deadline until completion of the VET programme (EBA, EFZ).

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