

# Permits at a glance

**Principle : Any foreigner working in Switzerland must hold a valid work permit or authorization before start of work !**

Applicable for :

- Permanent/regular staff
- Temporary staff

Is a work permit needed ? YES for non-Swiss

Activity of less than 3 months :

- EU/EFTA online job advert
- Non-EU/EFTA valid visa covering the duration of stay → is valid as an authorization without registration to the commune

Activity of more than 3 months :

- EU/EFTA registration on arrival in Switzerland within 14 days at the commune of residence to obtain a permit
- Non-EU/EFTA valid visa + registration within 14 days at the commune of residence to obtain a permit

If yes, plan ahead !

Respect the deadlines and processing time in order to ensure the person can start work as per start date

No work permit or valid authorization = no work

For non EU/EFTA nationals, the employee must wait for final approval or authorization to enter CH (visa) before traveling

**Processing time after application filing**



Non-EU/EFTA

3 months minimum

EU/EFTA

1 month minimum

UK

8 à 10 weeks

Processing times are estimates and may vary depending on workload of authorities. HR team processing time is not included (approx. 1 week after all documents have been accepted).

## EU/EFTA Countries

- **EU 26 + EU1** : Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden
- **EU 1** : Croatia, free movement of persons. Possible reactivation of safeguard clause from 01.01.26 to 31.12.26
- **EFTA** : Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway
- **United Kingdom** incl. England, Scotland, Wales - Northern Ireland not considered as EU by CH immigration
- **EU 27 + EFTA** = Geographical and professional mobility with safeguard clause possible (for EU 1). May start work after proper registration with local commune.
- **Rest of the world = Non-EU**

## Restrictions

- **Quota\* system applicable for :**  
\* except for PhD students, Post-doctoral researcher >2 years
- United Kingdom
- EU 1 - Croatia
- Non-EU
- Quotas are released quarterly
- First come, first served basis
- **Permits limited to :**
  - Employer (EPFL)
  - Canton (place of work)
  - Type of activity
- **Priority of local workers for new hires (hors UE) :** EPFL has to show that despite serious search efforts on Swiss & EU markets no other Swiss nor EU nationals can perform the job

## Types of work & residence permits

### L - Permit Short term permit

Limited to the duration of the contract or max. 12 months. Can be extended to further 12 months. Maximum 24 months.

### B - Permit Long term permit

For duration above 24 months or unlimited. Depending on nationality has to be renewed every year or every 5 years.

### C - Permit Permanent residence permit

Foreign nationals who have been granted a C permit after five years or ten years of residence in Switzerland (depending on the nationality). Subject to various conditions.

Professor appointed ETH Board obtains C permit directly

### G - Permit Cross-border commuters permit

EU/EFTA nationals who reside in an EU/EFTA member state and work in Switzerland.

They must return to their main place of residence abroad at least once a week.

For non-EU, additional and other conditions apply.

### Dependent permit

Mainly for married couples / children - permit always strictly linked to the permit of the main holder. Always one main holder and one dependent.

For non-married couples, if special conditions are met according to the guidelines of the authorities but very restrictive! May be with or without allowed work activity.