



School & education

Varied and multilingual

The Valais education system covers all levels, from primary school to a University of Applied Sciences, offering a dense network of schools across a relatively small area. Short travelling distances mean that children enjoy more freedom, independence and safety. Valais students only have to leave the canton if they wish to go to university – and the outstanding transport facilities keep travel times down even then; the University of Bern is just an hour away by train. Valais is a bilingual canton, and schools in Upper Valais give special attention to the teaching of French and English as a second language from primary school level. With a broad-based primary education, a choice of secondary and vocational schools and a wide range of adult and further education, Upper Valais is a great place to learn!

Levels of the education system

Switzerland's education system is divided into primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Primary and lower secondary education constitute the compulsory school period, which lasts nine years. After completing compulsory education, students can continue to the upper secondary level. After finishing school, more than 50% of students decide to do a practical apprenticeship, which can last up to four years. The tertiary level comprises universities and vocational education and training. Switzerland has universities as well as universities of applied sciences. For vocational education and training, there are professional colleges and technical schools that work towards the Federal Diploma of Higher Education and Advanced Federal Diploma examinations.

Compulsory education

Compulsory education begins at the age of 4 and lasts 11 years. If you move to Valais with children of school age, you will receive a registration form from the municipal school administration. Even if the family has not been granted all its permits yet, every child has the right to attend school. The public school system has an excellent reputation; it is mixed and free of charge. It is divided into three stages based on the intercantonal "HarmoS" programme:

- 1H and 2H: Children's social skills are encouraged in a playful way and they are prepared for primary school. The kindergarten is often situated in the local area so that children can make the journey on foot.
- 3H to 8H Reading and writing, mathematics, learning a second national language (German or French) from 5H, English from 7H, physical education, music, technical and visual design, humans and the environment, religion. Most municipalities in Valais have a primary school.
- 9H to 11H (lower secondary/orientation school) In addition to the subjects mentioned above, vocational guidance is also offered. Orientation school is often organised by region, with pupils travelling to school by public transport.

[Valais school and holiday timetable / www.vs.ch](http://www.vs.ch)

[Office for Education / www.vs.ch](http://www.vs.ch)

[Swiss Specialist Agency for ICT and Education / www.educa.ch](http://www.educa.ch)

[Schule und Elternhaus \(parents' support association\) / www.schule-elternhaus.ch](http://www.schule-elternhaus.ch)

After compulsory education

Compulsory education ends after 11 years or at the age of 15. Depending on the desired occupation and school grades, there are two options: vocational training or continuing with secondary school. For young people who move to Switzerland after the end of compulsory education (i.e. between the ages of 15 and 21) and do not have sufficient language skills to complete an apprenticeship, the Upper Valais Vocational School (Berufsfachschule Oberwallis) offers integration classes and pre-apprenticeships to help with language acquisition and careers guidance. For young people who do not find a solution directly after compulsory education, further transitional offers are available.

[Office for Vocational, Academic and Careers Guidance Upper Valais / www.vs.ch](http://www.vs.ch)

[Integration classes and pre-apprenticeships / www.berufsbildung-vs.ch](http://www.berufsbildung-vs.ch)

Transitional offers in Valais / www.vs.ch

Swiss information portal / www.berufsberatung.ch

Vocational training & secondary schools / www.valais4you.ch

Universities / www.valais4you.ch