



## **Program Overview: CDS International's Independent Work Abroad Program in Switzerland**

### **Introduction**

This program provides work authorization for Switzerland for recent U.S. graduates from universities and colleges. Participants find their own host companies and negotiate the terms of employment. Work authorization (*Stagiaire* visa) can be provided for up to 18 months. Programs start individually at the beginning of each month. Apply 8-12 weeks prior to your desired start date.

### **Responsibilities of Participant**

- submit an on-line application at <http://www.cdsintl.org/fromusa/iwapswitz.htm> 8-12 weeks prior to your desired program start date. All supporting materials must be sent to CDS 8-12 weeks prior to your desired start date.
- pay \$ 250 program fee
- find your own host company and negotiate the terms of the internship
- complete the required Swiss government documents
- provide CDS with contact information for your host company
- arrange and pay for your flight to and from Switzerland
- secure housing in Switzerland
- represent your home country in a responsible way

### **Responsibilities of CDS and Swiss partner organization**

- pre-departure orientation mailing
- work authorization
- support throughout the program in the U.S. and Switzerland

### **Eligibility Requirements**

#### **Citizenship**

U.S. citizenship

**Age:**

Maximum age is 30.

**Language:**

Your host company will determine which language skills they expect from you. Since Switzerland is a multi-lingual country, knowledge of French, Italian, or German is helpful.

**Education:**

A degree from an accredited college or university.

**Experience:**

It will be up to your host company to decide whether your previous work experience is sufficient. Related work experience is always a plus.

**Internships:**

It is our mission to promote international career development. Thus, CDS will only support quality internships that match your educational background/ professional field. Service jobs such as waiting tables, retail sales, etc., part-time positions and freelancing do not meet our requirements and thus, no work authorization can be issued. Please note that the Independent Work Abroad Program is *not* a work/ travel program.

## Application and Selection Process

**When to Apply:**

You have two options:

1. Apply before you start your search for a host company. Should your attempts to locate a company placement fail, we will reimburse \$ 150 of the program fee (see below).
2. Apply after you have secured an internship with a host company. The application materials contain a form that needs to be completed by your Swiss employer. Please return all completed materials at least 8-12 weeks prior to your desired start date.

**Materials to be submitted:**

1. Typed/printed CDS application (enclosed) or an on-line application
2. *Application for a permit for a temporary stay* (Gesuch um Aufenthaltsbewilligung)
3. *Employment Agreement* (Arbeitsvertrag für Stagiaires) - once you found a host company  
**OR**  
A standard internship contract containing all information requested in the Employment Agreement
4. Current resume in English
5. Copy of your diploma/ proof of graduation from an accredited university/ college
6. Copy of your U.S. passport
7. Letters of recommendation from former employers from within the last two years
8. Completed *Host Company Contact Information Form* (enclosed)- once you found a host company
9. Completed *Statement of Insurance Coverage Form* (enclosed)
10. Completed *Visa Pick-up Location Form* (enclosed)
11. Completed *Terms of Participation and Participant Code of Conduct Form* (enclosed)

12. The program fee of \$ 250.00 (including a \$ 100.00 non-refundable administration fee) must accompany your application. After acceptance to the program, the fee is non-refundable. However, should you not be able to secure an internship position, you will be refunded \$150. ***We will not consider applications until the application fee has been received.***

## **Program Details:**

### **Duration:**

3 to 18 months. Most participants and companies prefer an internship duration of 6 to 12 months. You will negotiate the duration of your program with your host company.

### **Work Authorization:**

Upon acceptance of a placement offer, we will request your work visa (*Stagiaire*) from the Bundesamt für Migration -BFM (Swiss Federal Office for Migration). The two forms (*Application for a permit for a temporary stay* and *Employment Agreement*) need to be completed and signed by you and the host company. The work visa will be issued within 8 to 12 weeks and will be sent to a Swiss consulate of your choice. You will be notified to pick it up. Please note that you cannot enter Switzerland without the *Stagiaire*/ work visa. **Applicants for the *Stagiaire* visa have to await the BFM's decision outside Switzerland.**

### **Compensation:**

It is your own responsibility to negotiate the compensation with your host company. Participants are responsible for all taxes.

### **Health Insurance:**

Your Swiss employer is required by law to enroll you in the Swiss health insurance system during your program.

### **Housing:**

It is your responsibility to locate housing in Switzerland. Most companies help participants wherever possible.

### **Other Costs:**

Participants are responsible for all costs incurred in-country, including costs related to securing housing, taxes, residency permit fees, etc. Participants are also responsible for any visa fees incurred in the U.S.

Feel free to contact us with all questions you might have while completing your application, as it might save you (and us!) time and work.

***We look forward to receiving your application!***