

Special Programme “Increasing the Number of Medical School Graduates”

Given the impending shortage of doctors, especially of general practitioners, the Swiss Higher Education Council launched a special programme in January 2016 to increase the number of medical school graduates in Switzerland. Within this framework, swissuniversities has devised a well-coordinated overall project aimed at successively raising the number of medical graduates per year from ca. 850 to 1'350 in 2025.

The special programme consists of two projects: Funded with max. CHF 30 million, the first project sets out to increase the number of Bachelor's and Master's degrees in the period 2017–2019 compared to the reference year 2013. swissuniversities is responsible for coordinating efforts between the universities participating in the scheme. Funded with max. CHF 70 million, the second project will cover non-recurring lump sum payments for new university places created in the field of medicine by 2021 compared to the reference year 2016. Implementation of the following measures is envisaged:

- Universities that already offer medical degrees (Basel, Bern, Fribourg (Bachelor), Lausanne, Geneva, and Zurich) will increase their student intake.
- ETH Zurich will devise a new Bachelor's in Medicine.
- The universities of Lausanne and Geneva will expand their one-year “transitional programmes,” which enable selected students from the natural sciences to transfer to Master's programmes in medicine (among others, from EPFL).
- The University of Fribourg, the Università della Svizzera italiana, and the University in Zurich (in cooperation with the universities of St. Gallen and Lucerne) will create new Master's programmes.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the projects at the various universities are carefully aligned. Together, the projects will improve the geographical distribution of institutions offering medical training in Switzerland. Pursuant to the Bologna Reform, they will also strengthen student mobility (Bachelor's to Master's) and help to promote programmes clearly distinct from each other. The projects allow universities to focus consciously on general practice training or on state-of-the-art medicine. They also lay the foundations for strengthening interprofessionalism in the health sector. The special programme enables Swiss universities to make an important contribution to safeguarding medical provision in Switzerland.