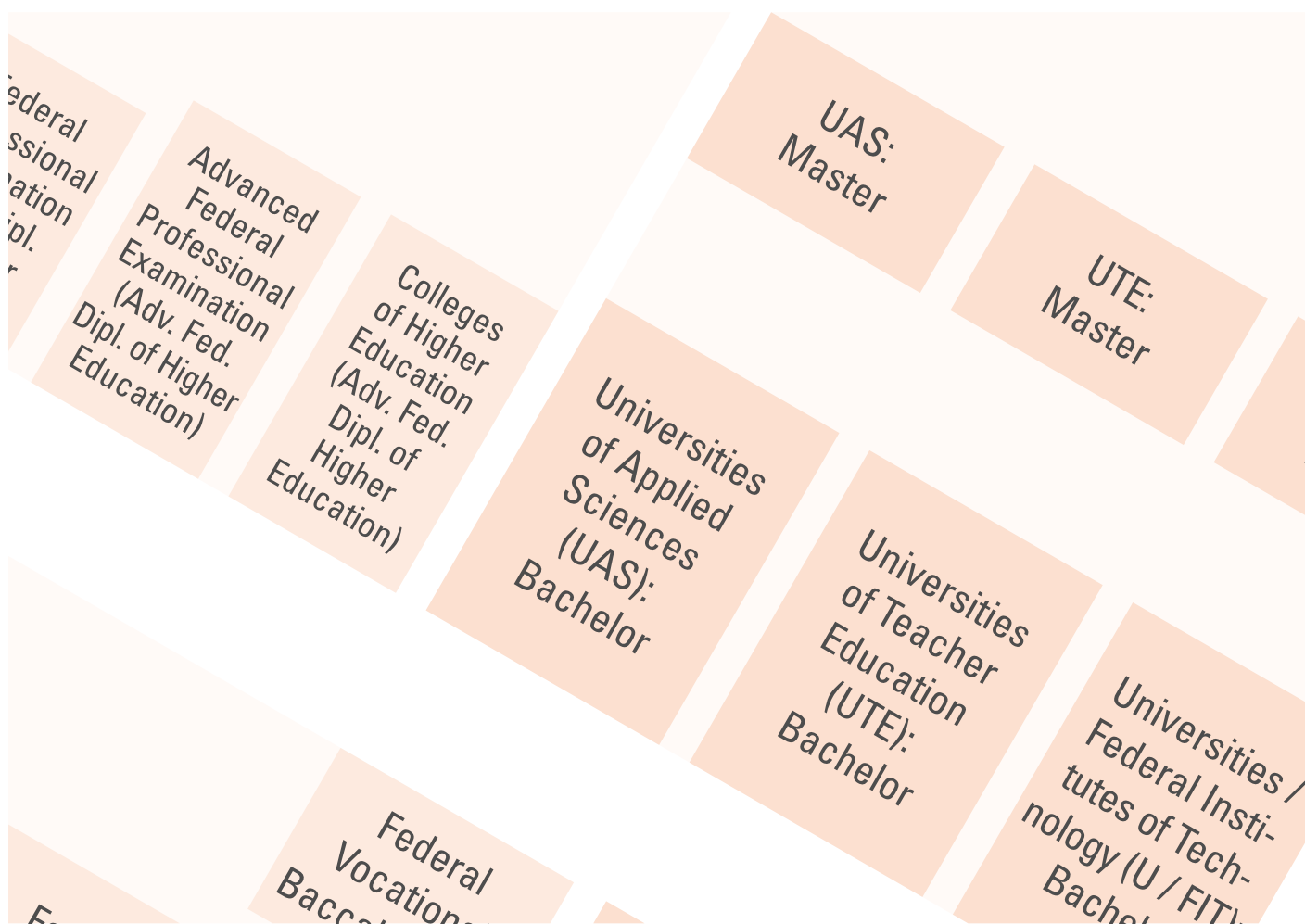
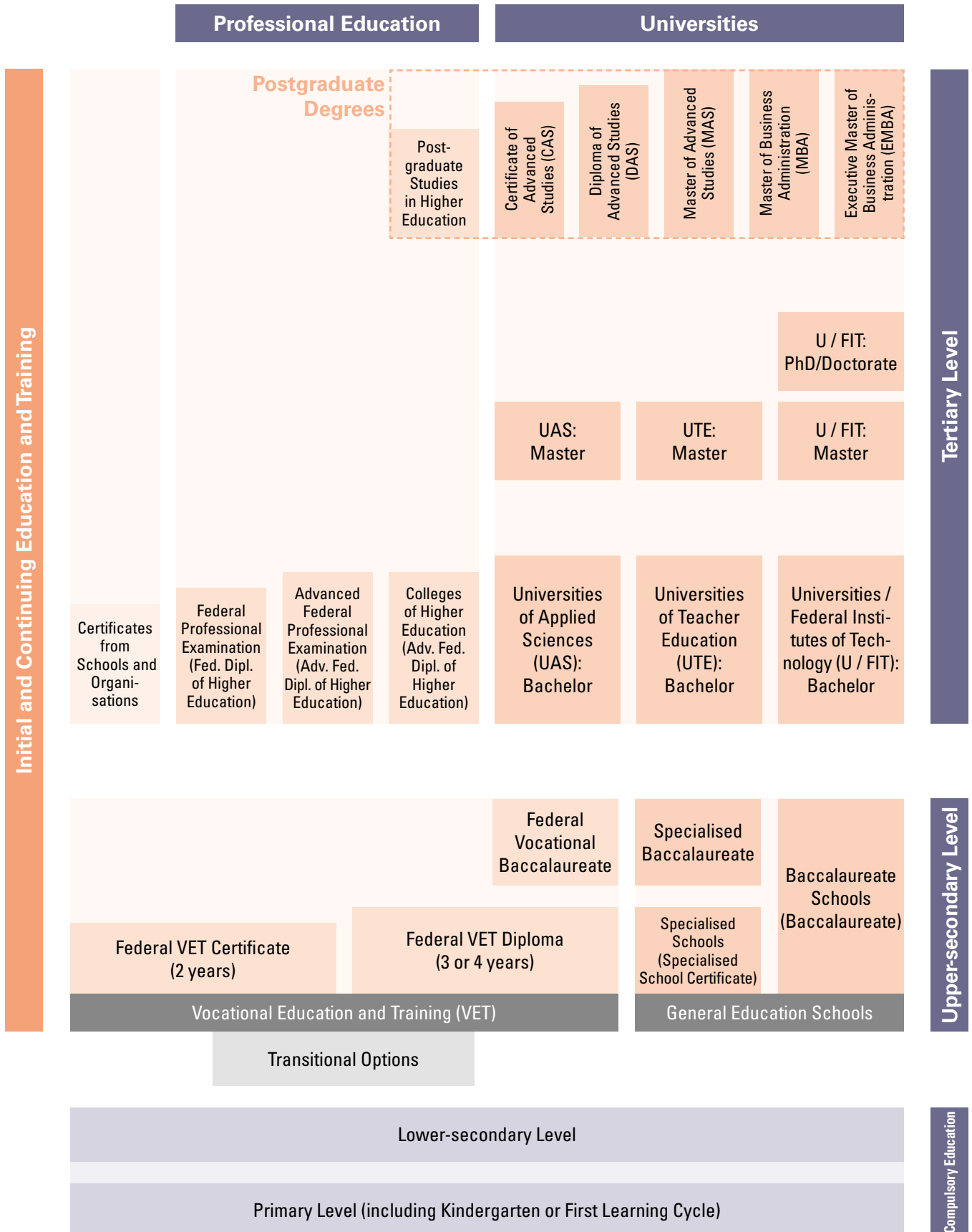


Education and Training Overview of the Swiss Education System

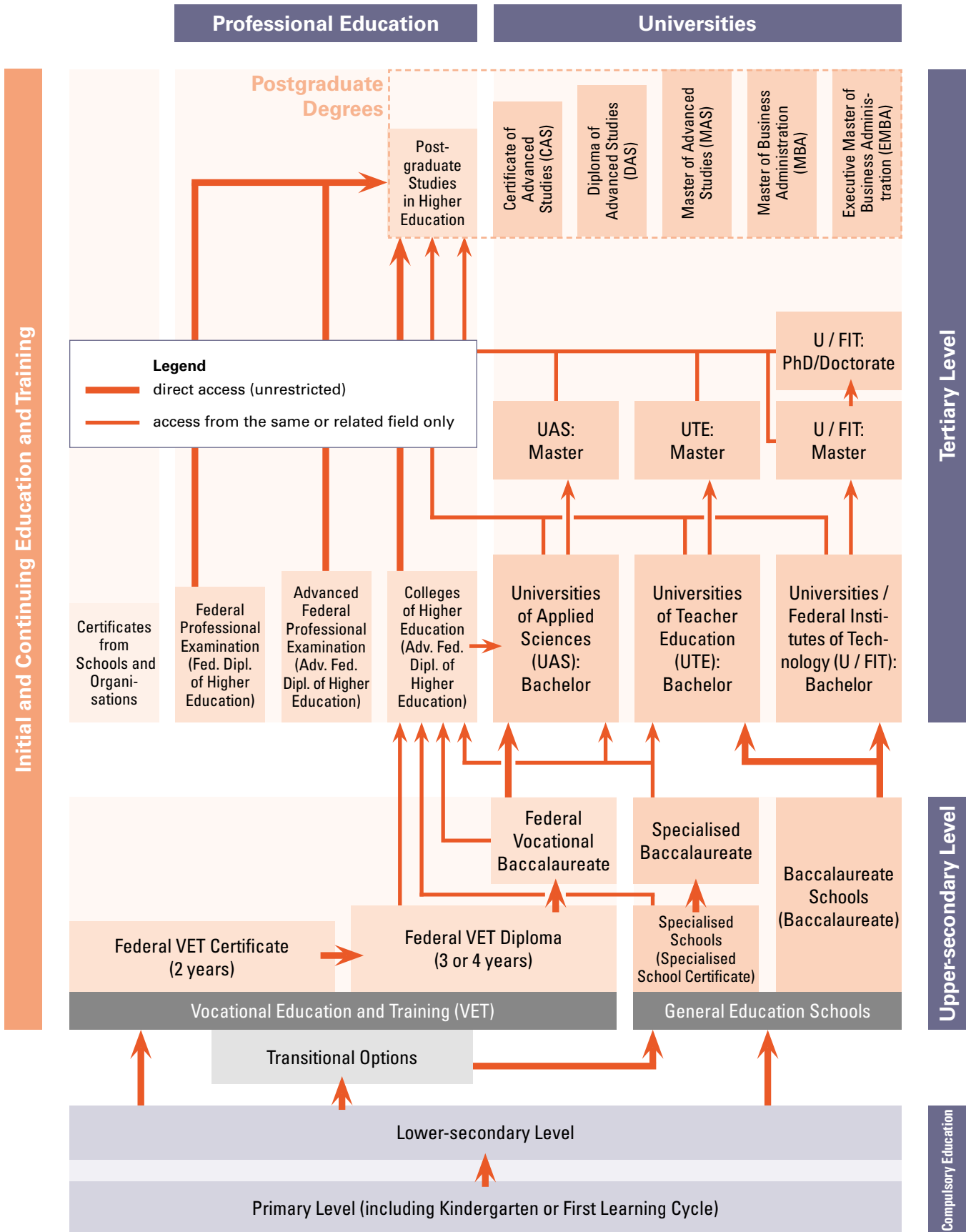
The range of education and training opportunities in Switzerland is broad. Especially at tertiary level, it is difficult to keep track of everything. Ausbildung-Weiterbildung.ch shows you the system and your options with a practical graphic and explanatory texts - from primary school and vocational education and training (VET) through to the programmes on offer in the areas of continuing professional education and universities.



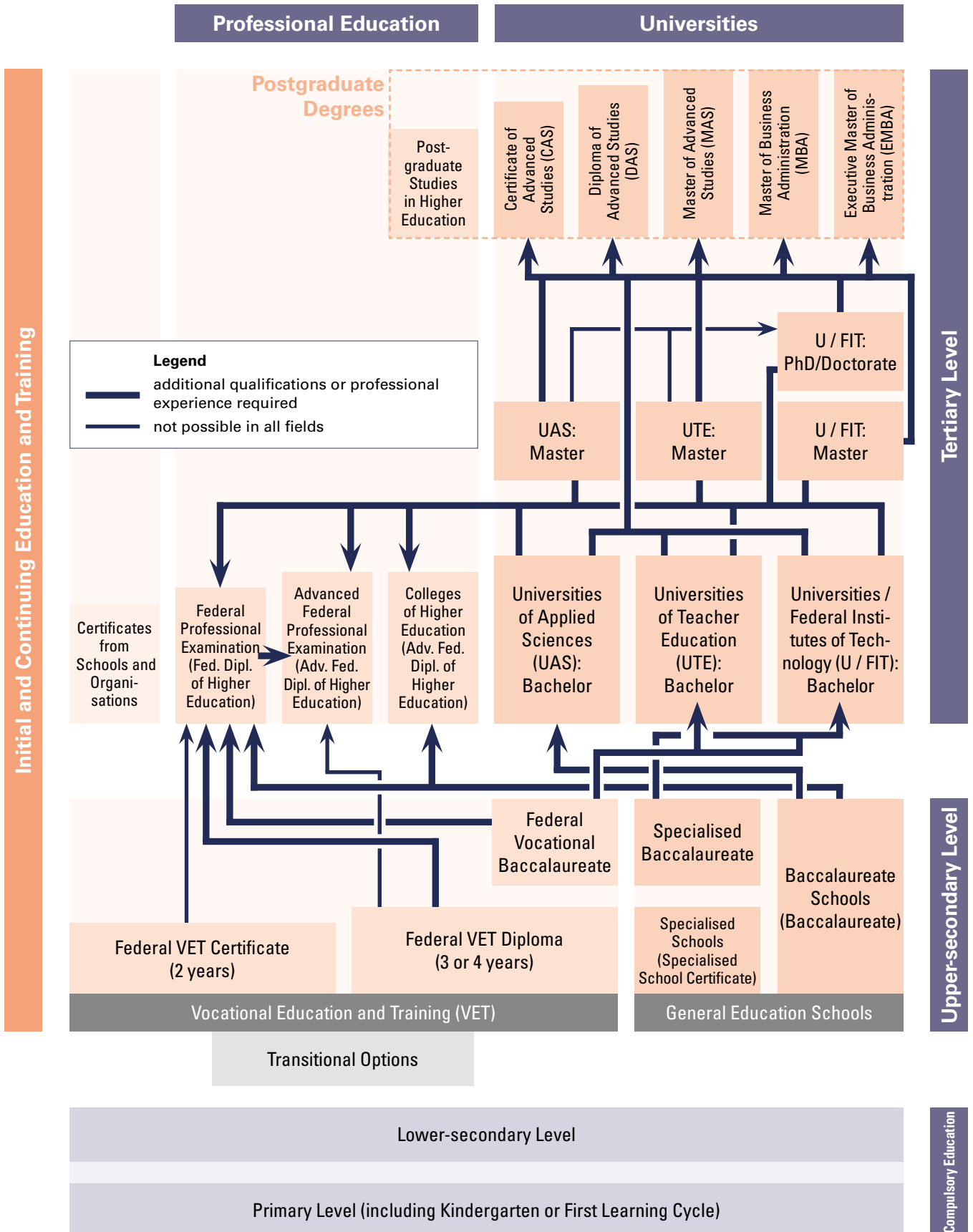
An Overview of the Swiss Education System



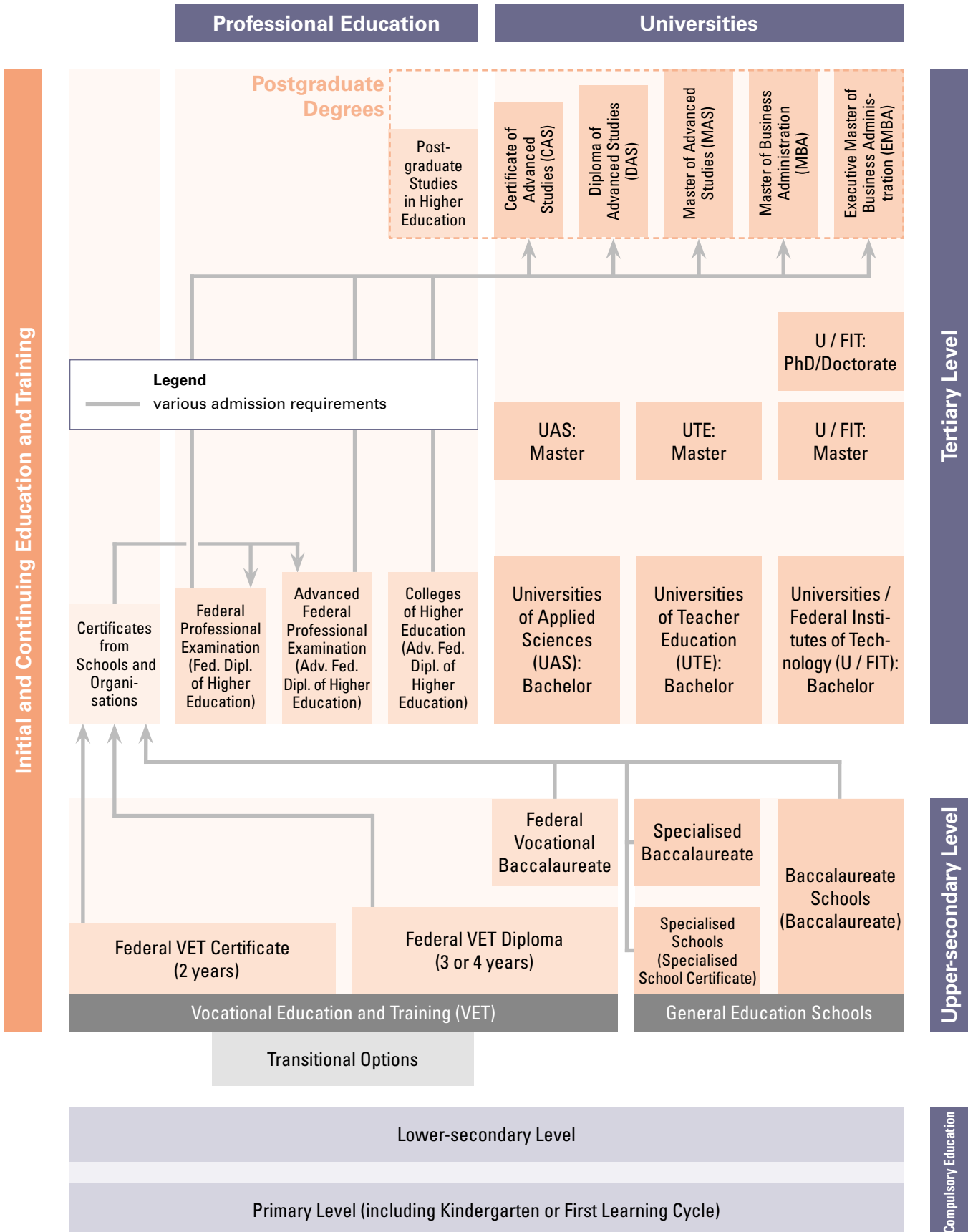
Direct Access Options



Access with Additional Qualifications or Professional Experience



Various Admission Requirements





Haven't found the right training or further education yet? Benefit from educational advice now!

The Swiss education system allows for many different ways to achieve professional and personal goals.

However, the many options can also be confusing and overwhelming.

Which training or further education is the right path for me?

In our telephone education advice service, we will guide you through the "education jungle" and show you your options step by step.

Your advantages:

You will receive

- Suggestions for suitable courses, seminars or training programs based on your information in the questionnaire
- An overview of the different levels and types of education
- Information about the Swiss education system

This will give you an initial overview that can help you find or decide on the right training or further education program.

Register now and concretize your training plans.

www.ausbildung-weiterbildung.ch/Bildungshilfe/Bildungsberatung

Explanation of Terms Used in the Graphic (from bottom to top)

Compulsory Education

Compulsory education comprises the primary level and the lower-secondary level. The main responsibility for these schools lies with the cantons. The municipalities ensure that every child can attend a public school free of charge. In 2015, the school system was standardised with the HarmoS Concordat. However, some cantons (AR, GR, LU, NW, OW, TG, UR, ZG) have not joined the concordat.

Primary Level

The primary level is the first phase of compulsory schooling. The curricula are drawn up by the cantons and therefore vary. However, the focus everywhere is on the development of intellectual and creative skills.

In the HarmoS cantons, the primary level lasts eight years and comprises a two-year first learning cycle or entry level (instead of the previous kindergarten) and six years of primary school. The starting age in the HarmoS cantons is around four years, the leaving age 12-13 years. First learning cycles are not compulsory in all other cantons. If not, children start primary school at around the age of six and attend for five to six years. Yet, the non-compulsory, free pre-school (kindergarten) is also very popular.

Lower-secondary Level

The lower-secondary level is part of compulsory schooling and lasts three years (four years in Ticino). Training is provided wholly or partly in performance groups, i.e. in separate classes, or in joint classes with separate levels in certain subjects. The cantons have different designations for lower-secondary level and its performance groups.

Transitional Options

Transitional options are aimed at young people who do not yet know what their future career should look like or who have not yet found a VET (vocational education and training) position. There are also opportunities to prepare for a specific profession (e.g. preliminary course for design training). Transitional options are all programmes that build a bridge between compulsory schooling and the voluntary upper-secondary level.

Upper-secondary Level

After compulsory schooling, adolescents and young adults move on to upper-secondary level. This level comprises general education at baccalaureate schools and specialised schools as well as vocational education and training (VET) programmes.

Training programmes at upper-secondary level generally last three to four years and qualify students for further education at tertiary level (e.g. university, UAS, preparatory courses as part of the Federal Professional Examination and Advanced Federal Professional Examination).

Federal VET Certificate

The Federal VET Certificate is proof of completion of two years of vocational education and training (VET). The title is federally recognised. The Federal VET Certificate is aimed at practically gifted young people with certain deficits and leads to a fully-fledged professional qualification. As with a three- or four-year VET Diploma, the two-year VET consists of practical work, courses at vocational school, and inter-company courses. After obtaining the Federal VET Certificate, it is possible to complete a shortened VET Diploma-programme (entry into the second year of the programme).

Federal VET Diploma

The Federal VET Diploma is awarded after successful completion of a three or four-year vocational education and training (VET). To obtain the diploma, a final examination must be passed in the last year of the VET. The examination consists of a practical and theoretical part. During the VET, trainees work at their training company and attend vocational school (hence the term «dual apprenticeship»). It is also possible to attend a vocational baccalaureate school.

Federal Vocational Baccalaureate

The Federal Vocational Baccalaureate combines basic vocational education and training (VET) with an extended general education. This baccalaureate can be completed during the VET or afterwards in special programmes (one year full-time, one and a half to two years part-time). Federal Vocational Baccalaureates are granted examination-free access to

all degree programmes at Universities of Applied Sciences. If they have passed the Passerelle-examination, they also have access to a (proper) university degree programme.

Specialised Schools

Specialised Schools replace the former diploma schools in the vocational fields of health, social work, education, communication/information, design/art and music/theatre. After compulsory schooling, they provide an introduction to one of these vocational fields through a combination of general education and vocational field-related teaching. The Specialised School lasts three years and leads to the Specialised School Certificate, which gives direct access to certain courses of study at Colleges of Higher Education.

Specialised Baccalaureate

After completing a one-year internship in the relevant vocational field, holders of the Specialised School Certificate can obtain a Specialised Baccalaureate. This is valid throughout Switzerland and allows access to certain University of Applied Sciences degree programmes within the corresponding professional field.

Baccalaureate Schools

Attendance at the baccalaureate schools (grammar schools) varies from canton to canton, but lasts a minimum of four years. This is because in some cantons the baccalaureate schools follows on from compulsory schooling at lower-secondary level, while in others it comprises the last part of compulsory schooling. Depending on the canton and baccalaureate school, students can choose different specialisations such as languages, physics, economics or visual arts.

Holders of a baccalaureate degree are granted examination-free access to most degree programmes at (proper) universities and Federal Institutes of Technology (FIT). With one year of professional experience, it is also possible to attend a University of Applied Sciences.

For adults, there is the possibility of subsequently acquiring a cantonal baccalaureate at a cantonal baccalaureate school for adults or the federal baccalaureate at a private baccalaureate school.

Tertiary Level

The tertiary level is divided into two areas: Tertiary level A comprises studies at universities, while tertiary level B comprises Professional Education (Colleges of Higher Education as well as the Federal Professional and Advanced Federal Professional Examinations).

Numerous new education programmes at postgraduate level (NDS), Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS), Master of Advanced Studies (MAS), and supplementary Federal Professional Examination as well as Advanced Federal Professional Examination have given additional impetus to tertiary level education in Switzerland. More than 30 per cent of adults now have a tertiary level qualification. And the trend is rising.

Certificates from Schools and Organisations

There is a wide range of certificates from schools and organisations that are not regulated or recognised by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation. The prestige of such certificates depends on the reputation of the training centre and its establishment and recognition in the labour market, as well as the quality of teaching, etc. There are numerous training programmes that are completed with a certificate and are absolutely profitable and career-enhancing. For example, in the area of language courses or industry-specific further training.

Professional Education

Professional education is aimed at professionals who wish to deepen their specialised knowledge. The aim of the programme is to provide higher professional qualifications and prepare skilled workers for management or higher specialist functions. Professional Education includes Colleges of Higher Education as well as the Federal Professional and Advanced Federal Professional Examinations. These qualifications are in great demand in the business world thanks to their practical orientation.

Federal Professional Examination / Federal Diploma of Higher Education

By passing a Federal Professional Examination (FPE), graduates of a corresponding course secure a Federal Diploma of Higher Education. This qualifies them for positions that require in-depth specialist

knowledge and/or leadership qualities. A course to prepare for the Federal Professional Examination usually lasts one year and is subject-specific (e.g. Specialist in Public Relations). As a rule, there is only one final examination per year for each specialisation, and the examination pressure is relatively high.

Advanced Federal Professional Examination / Advanced Federal Diploma of Higher Education

By passing an Advanced Federal Professional Examination (AFPE), graduates are awarded an Advanced Federal Diploma of Higher Education. This often builds on a Federal Diploma of Higher Education and is correspondingly more prestigious. The courses usually last three to four semesters and, in contrast to those at Colleges of Higher Education (CHE), are more subject-specific (e.g. Head of Communications). There is usually only one final examination per year for each specialisation, and the examination pressure is relatively high.

Colleges of Higher Education (CHE)

Colleges of Higher Education (CHE) are part of the professional education area. They tend to have a generalist focus (e.g. business administration, or electrical engineering), but more and more subject- and industry-specific courses are also being offered (e.g. Agro-Commercial Specialist). The practical orientation is high and the focus is on problems from everyday working life. Courses at CHE generally last three years and conclude with the Advanced Federal Diploma of Higher Education. The final examination is based on permanent practical transfer through work (practical work, term papers, diploma thesis), but may also include a traditional examination, depending on the school.

Postgraduate studies in Higher Education (CHE)

In addition to training programmes, Colleges of Higher Education (CHE) also offer postgraduate studies. These allow further specialisation and in-depth study in a specific subject area. Graduates of the usually one-year courses receive a Federal Diploma and are authorised to use the corresponding title. The final examination is based on a permanent transfer of practical experience through assignments (practical work, term papers, diploma thesis), but may also include a traditional examination, depending on the school.

Universities

Switzerland has three types of universities: Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS), Universities of Teacher Education (UTE) and proper universities (the cantonal universities and the Federal Institutes of Technology). In contrast to Professional Education, the university programmes focus more on research and science. The degrees are two-tiered and end first with a Bachelor's, then a Master's degree. At (proper) universities, a third stage is possible: the doctorate (PhD/DBA).

A Bachelor's degree from a University of Applied Sciences (UAS) is not rated the same as a Bachelor's degree from a (proper) university. Admission requirements are usually a vocational apprenticeship with a Federal Vocational Baccalaureate for UAS, and a (grammar school) baccalaureate for universities/FIT.

Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS): Bachelor

The Bachelor's degree programme is the first stage of a degree course at a University of Applied Sciences and provides application-oriented, specialist basic knowledge. As a rule, it lasts six semesters (full-time) or eight semesters (part-time) and concludes with a Bachelor's thesis. 180 ECTS points are awarded. For admission, a Vocational or Specialised Baccalaureate is required. In the case of a (grammar school) baccalaureate, one year of professional experience must also be demonstrated.

University of Teacher Education (UTE): Bachelor

The Bachelor's degree programme is the first stage of a degree course at a University of Teacher Education and provides the scientific and didactic foundations for teaching at a public school. It generally lasts six semesters full-time and includes integrated internships. It is awarded 180 ECTS credits. The degree programmes for first learning cycle and primary level lead to a Bachelor's degree and a teaching diploma for the corresponding school level. A (grammar school) baccalaureate or Specialised Baccalaureate in Education is required for admission. With a Federal Vocational Baccalaureate or another Specialised Baccalaureate, admission is also possible after passing the Passerelle-exam. Alternatively, a teaching diploma recognised by the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education or another Bachelor's degree may also allow admission.

Universities/FIT: Bachelor

The Bachelor's degree programme is the first stage of a degree course at a (proper) university or Federal Institute of Technology (FIT) and imparts theoretical and research-oriented basic knowledge. It generally lasts six semesters and concludes with a Bachelor's thesis. A total of 180 ECTS credits are awarded. For admission, a (grammar school) baccalaureate is required. If you have a vocational baccalaureate, you must also take the Passerelle-exam, for which you need to prepare carefully. Various schools offer corresponding programmes, usually on a part-time basis. These take two to three semesters. Preparation for the exam can also be done on a self-study basis.

Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS): Master

A consecutive Master's degree builds on the Bachelor's programme and can be completed full-time or part-time. It is therefore the second stage of a UAS degree programme and provides in-depth and specialised knowledge. The Master's programme lasts two to four semesters and concludes with a Master's thesis. Upon successful completion, the following titles are awarded, depending on the specialisation: MSc = Master of Science (in mathematics, computer science, natural sciences, economics, engineering, medicine) UAS or MA = Master of Arts (in humanities, social sciences, arts) UAS. 90-120 ECTS points are awarded for the consecutive Master's degree programme. Universities of Applied Sciences sometimes offer access to doctoral programmes through cooperation with domestic or foreign (proper) universities.

University of Teacher Education (UTE): Master

In addition to the three-semester consecutive Master's degree programme, the Universities of Teacher Education also offer continuous Bachelor's-Master's degree programmes that lead directly to a Master's degree in nine semesters. The degree programme can be completed full-time or alongside a career/family. The course content serves to deepen and specialise in the teaching diploma for lower-secondary level. Depending on the degree programme, 90 to 120 or 270 ECTS credits are awarded. Successful completion of a Master's degree programme leads to the title «Master of Arts UTE». The Master's degree for the lower-secondary level is supplemented with a national teaching diploma. Admission requires either a UTE Bachelor's degree, a

baccalaureate or a Vocational Baccalaureate with a Passerelle-exam. Alternatively, a teaching diploma recognised by the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education or another Bachelor's degree may also allow admission.

Universities/FIT: Master

The Master's degree, or more precisely the consecutive Master's degree, is the second stage of a university degree. It builds on the Bachelor's degree and provides in-depth and specialized knowledge. It lasts three to four semesters as a full-time course, in some fields of study up to six semesters, and is completed with a Master's thesis. Upon successful completion at a university or Federal Institute of Technology (FIT), a title is awarded depending on the subject area: e.g. MSc = Master of Science (mathematics, computer science, natural sciences, economics, engineering, medicine), MA = Master of Arts (humanities, social sciences, arts), Master of Engineering (engineering sciences), Master of Laws (jurisprudence), etc. 90–120 ECTS points are awarded (equivalent to approx. 2700–3600 hours).

Universities/FIT: Doctorate (PhD/DBA)

After the university Master's degree, there is the possibility to do a doctorate (PhD). The doctorate is the highest academic title and requires an extensive doctoral thesis. The PhD is a scientific research doctorate and is particularly suitable for pursuing an academic career. The admission requirements are regulated by the universities.

In addition to the university doctorate from Swiss universities, there is also the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) from Anglo-Saxon university management training programmes. Both titles are basically equivalent. The DBA was originally developed by Harvard University in the USA. It focuses on the transfer of knowledge between business management practice and university research. It has no equivalent in the German-speaking university system. In Switzerland, DBA programmes are offered by business schools in cooperation with foreign universities.

Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS)

A CAS (Certificate of Advanced Studies) is a short continuing education programme at a university. It usually lasts one semester and is completed on a part-time basis. CAS is no federally protected

title and can only be compared internationally on the basis of the ETCS points earned (usually 10–15 ECTS).

Diploma of Advanced Studies (DAS)

A DAS (Diploma of Advanced Studies) is a continuing education programme at a university and is usually completed with a diploma thesis. The programme usually lasts two to three semesters and is completed while working. DAS is no federally protected title and can only be compared internationally on the basis of the ETCS points earned (usually 30 ECTS).

Master of Advanced Studies (MAS)

A MAS (Master of Advanced Studies) is a part-time postgraduate programme at a university for experienced professionals. It comprises 60 ECTS credits, usually lasts four semesters and corresponds to an earlier postgraduate degree programme with an additional Master's thesis. It must not be confused with a consecutive Master's degree, the second stage of a degree programme. A MAS is comparable to an EMBA. However, while the MAS covers a subject-specific specialisation, the EMBA is a generalist business education programme. The MAS is only

awarded in Switzerland, while the EMBA is also awarded internationally. Both postgraduate master's degrees (MAS/EMBA) at universities are recognised by the Swiss Confederation.

Master of Business Administration (MBA)

In Switzerland, as in the Anglo-Saxon world (USA, UK, Australia, etc.), an MBA (Master of Business Administration) is a part-time leadership and management programme for younger professionals without economic knowledge who aspire to a management position. An EMBA (Executive Master of Business Administration), on the other hand, is an in-depth part-time leadership and management programme for professionals who are already in a management position. In recent years, the schools in Switzerland that offer an MBA programme have increasingly blurred this distinction.

Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA)

An EMBA (Executive Master of Business Administration) is an in-depth part-time management training programme and is aimed at experienced specialists or managers or non-economists who wish to qualify in the field of management.

[Ausbildung-Weiterbildung.ch](http://ausbildung-weiterbildung.ch) offers people interested in education a wealth of information and decision-making aids such as **FAQ**, **tips**, **guides**, **self-tests** and **evaluations** from course participants to help them choose the right education program and the right school. [Ausbildung-Weiterbildung.ch](http://ausbildung-weiterbildung.ch) – Fast, accurate, competent.

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