

## Residence and work permits

### 4.1.1 (art. 1-3 OASA) - Definition of gainful activity

Any self-employed or salaried activity that normally generates income is considered to be gainful, even if the activity is carried out free of charge or if the remuneration is limited to covering basic needs (food, accommodation).

A residence and work permit is required if the activity lasts more than eight days per calendar year.

**Order of priority:** The principle of priority for native workers is applied in all cases. In addition to Swiss citizens, established foreign nationals and foreign applicants who are already in Switzerland and authorised to work are considered as native workers. This does not include third-country nationals.

### Conditions and rules applicable to each category

- a) The EPFL must receive an entry permit (AE) or residence permit (AAS) from the competent authorities of the canton in which the activity takes place, depending on which countries are not subject to visa requirements. Without this prior authorisation, all employment is strictly forbidden by law.
- b) Foreign nationals must register with the Residents' Registration Office in their municipality of residence within 14 days of their arrival in order to settle their residence/stay conditions if their stay is longer than 3 months.
- c) A temporary (**non-quota**) B or L permit is then issued by the authorities.

## DOCTORAL ASSISTANTS

*4.4.5.3 may be admitted under Art. 40 OASA.*

### *Group 1 and 2 a*

The status is limited to the duration of the thesis, i.e. generally 3 or 4 years, with a maximum of 6 years including the period as a post-doctoral fellow.

Doctoral assistants work part-time or full-time in parallel with their thesis. In the case of a part-time position, gainful employment outside the EPFL may be authorised provided that, in principle, it falls within the scope of the thesis. If this is not the case, the work must not exceed 15 hours per week, so as not to delay the work on the thesis.

Doctoral assistants are subject to the conditions and rules set out in letters **a), b) and c).**

## EXCHANGE DOCTORAL STUDENTS

### *Group 2 b*

Unlike doctoral assistants, PhD students do not work as assistants in parallel with their thesis.

The conditions and rules listed in letters **a), b) and c)** apply.

## POST-DOCS

*4.4.5.4 may be admitted under Art. 40 OASA.*

The maximum duration of this status is 6 years (including any stay as a doctoral assistant), starting from the date of obtaining the doctorate. Residence as a post-doctoral researcher begins no later than 2 years after completion of the doctoral thesis and the maximum duration of stay is limited to 4 years.

A post-doctoral researcher is a scientist with a doctorate obtained in Switzerland or abroad who wishes to continue his or her research in the field of his or her previous studies and work. This activity may be accompanied by a teaching load/hours (assistantship).

The conditions and rules listed in letters **a), b) and c)** also apply.

## SCHOLARSHIP HOLDERS

*4.4.5.6 may be admitted under Art. 40 OASA.*

A scholarship holder is someone who holds a university degree or a diploma from a higher technical institute and who has been awarded a scholarship by a Swiss, foreign or international organisation with the aim of acquiring a specialisation or pursuing research work. They can benefit from this privileged status for the duration of the scholarship.

The conditions and rules listed in letters **a), b) and c)** also apply.

## ACADEMIC GUESTS AND VISITING PROFESSORS

*4.4.5.7 may be admitted under Art. 40 OASA. Duration of stay limited to 1 year.*

Academic guests and visiting professors are granted sabbatical leave and participate temporarily in EPFL's scientific activities (teaching and research).

According to the directives ([LEX 4.2.5](#)) of the Academic Vice Presidency for Professorial Affairs (VAP-EM-APR), the duration of the stay must not exceed 9 months and the age limit is 65.

The conditions and rules listed in letters **a), b) and c)** also apply.

## ORDINARY, ASSOCIATE AND ASSISTANT PROFESSORS APPOINTED BY THE CEPF

The conditions and rules set out in letters **a) and b)** also apply. The person concerned will obtain a permanent residence permit (permit C) as soon as he/she takes up employment.

### INTERNS

Interns with or without a university degree may complete an internship at EPFL in accordance with the rules and regulations applicable to the

- a) Temporary academic staff \*
- b) Temporary non-academic staff

for which the Human Resources team is the responsible unit for the following categories:

- 2.1.2 Bachelor's/master's students doing a summer internship (cf\*)
- 2.1.3 Master's degrees (cf\*)
- 2.1.2 Work placements prior to higher education (see &)
- 2.1.3 Work placements during higher education (see &)
- 2.1.4 Summer work placements (cf&)
- 2.1.5 Internships after higher education (cf&)

The conditions and rules listed in letters **a), b) and c)** are also applicable according to the criteria defined by the authorities.

### EMPLOYEES WITH A QUOTA PERMIT

A B permit with a quota (art 20 OASA) is mainly intended for people with high qualifications and important responsibilities.

- The L permit quota (art. 19 OASA) applies to people employed in a scientific capacity, such as scientific collaborators/post-doctoral researchers who have completed their theses more than 2 years ago and scientific assistants, or in exceptional cases in a support function.

There are two distinct categories of year-round work permit, depending on the nationality of the person concerned:

- i. **Nationals of non-EU (non-EFTA) countries who :**
  - a) Obtain a B permit, renewable from year to year, then converted to a C permit (settlement permit) after 10 years of uninterrupted presence in Switzerland.  
Exception: nationals of the United States and Canada obtain a C permit after 5 years.
  - b) Obtain an L permit, renewable for a maximum of 24 months, with the possibility of converting to a B permit if specific conditions are met.
  
- ii. **EU/EFTA nationals**
  - a) In principle, they obtain a B permit for 5 years (employment contract of 12 months or more, or indefinite), which entitles them to a C permit on expiry if they meet the conditions defined by the authorities.

If you have any specific questions that are not answered in this document, you can contact the Vaud cantonal authorities directly at the following link:

<https://www.vd.ch/themes/population/population-etrangere/entree-et-sejour/vous-etes-de-nationalite-etrangere-et-souhaitez-sejourner-travailler-rejoindre-votre-famille-ou-etudier-dans-le-canton-de-vaud/>

## FAMILY REUNIFICATION

In principle, family reunification is possible for all categories except trainees, subject to the agreement of the competent authorities.

*Where LEI applies to the family group :*

***Family reunification is possible for spouses and/or children up to the age of 18 with a Swiss national.***

The application for reunification must be made within 5 years of the granting of the residence permit or the establishment of the family relationship. Children under the age of 12 are entitled to a settlement permit (permit C). Children over the age of 12 must be reunited within 12 months and are entitled to a B permit. Spouses may also be of the same sex, subject to the conditions and criteria laid down by the authorities.

***Family reunification of the spouse and/or children of a foreign national holding a C settlement permit, B residence permit or L short-term residence permit is limited to the spouse and dependent unmarried children under the age of 18.***

The application for reunification must be made within 5 years of the granting of the residence permit or establishment of the family relationship (common household, suitable accommodation, not dependent on social assistance, spouse must prove basic knowledge of the French language according to criteria defined by the Confederation). Children over the age of 12 must be reunited within 12 months. The spouse may also be a person of the same sex, subject to conditions and criteria defined by the authorities.

In the case of a stay with a view to marriage, a residence permit of limited duration may be issued to a foreign national to enable him or her to prepare for marriage to a Swiss citizen or a foreign national holding a long-term residence permit (B or C permit).

Steps must be taken with the Civil Status Office before entering Switzerland.

A certificate from the Civil Status Office confirming that the marriage preparations have been completed and that the marriage can be celebrated within a reasonable time is required.

*Where the FMFA applies :*

***Foreign nationals from a third country or from a European country can be reunited with a holder of an EU/EFTA permit for the spouse, children under the age of 21 or dependent children and dependent relatives in the ascending line, subject to certain conditions.***

*Family members (with the exception of relatives in the ascending line) who benefit from reunification, regardless of their nationality, have the right to take up employment or become self-employed throughout Switzerland (B permit for the family). The spouse may also be a person of the same sex, subject to the conditions and criteria defined by the authorities.*

## **Gainful employment of spouse and children**

***The foreign spouse of a Swiss national or of the holder of a permanent residence permit (Permit C) or a residence permit (Permit B), as well as their foreign children, may work or be self-employed anywhere in Switzerland.***

***The foreign spouse or children of the holder of a short-term residence permit (L permit) may be authorised to work as an employee if an employer submits an application and the conditions for granting authorisation are met. However, the authorisation granted to the holder's spouse and children is limited to the period of validity of the short-term residence permit of the person who benefited from family reunification.***