EUROPE · SWITZERLAND · NON-EU/EFTA PHARMACY DEGREE ROUTE

CH How to register as a pharmacist in Switzerland

Pharmacy is governed by the federal Medical Professions Act (Medizinalberufegesetz, MedBG). The Medical Professions Commission (MEBEKO) at the BAG decides on foreign diplomas, and the canton where you work issues the licence to practise on your own responsibility. Licence or registration: **Federal diploma (eidg. Diplom) and cantonal licence**. Regulator: **Federal Office of Public Health (BAG/FOPH), MEBEKO, and the cantons**. Every fact was checked against official sources on **20 November 2026**.

NO DIRECT RECOGNITION A pharmacy degree from outside the EU/EFTA cannot be recognised in Switzerland. For pharmacists, the BAG lists one route to the federal diploma: a master's in pharmacy at a Swiss university, then the federal exam. The clinical-experience shortcuts on the same BAG page are for doctors, not pharmacists.

Who decides what	
MEBEKO (at the BAG)	Decides on MedReg entry of foreign diplomas and the conditions for the federal diploma. Supervises the federal exams.
Swiss universities	Decide admission to the master's in pharmacy and how much prior study counts.
Pharmacy exam commission	Runs the federal exam in pharmacy at the exam sites.
Canton	Issues the licence to practise on your own responsibility and oversees supervised employment.
Cantonal migration office, SEM, employer	Permits and visas are separate from registration. The employer decides hiring.

Who can apply

- A diploma from outside the EU/EFTA cannot be recognised. Nationality does not change this for the federal diploma route.
- For MedReg entry: your diploma must allow supervised practice in the issuing country and meet minimum hours and years of theory and practice.
- Admission to the federal exam requires completing a study programme accredited under the MedBG, in practice a Swiss master's in pharmacy.
- Indirect recognition is possible only if an EU/EFTA state recognised your diploma, you are a Swiss or EU/EFTA national (or spouse), and have 3 years of recent clinical work.
- For a cantonal licence you must be trustworthy and fit to practise, and know an official language of that canton.
- MedReg entry does not let you register for the federal exam.

The steps, with approximate time and cost

1. **Reach B2 in a national language**
   MedReg entry needs at least B2 in the language of work: a CEFR certificate under 6 years old, a degree taught in that language, or 3 years of work in it in the last 10.
   Time: 12–18 months (est.) · Cost: set by test centre

2. **Optional: register your foreign diploma**
   MEBEKO can enter a non-recognised diploma in MedReg if it allows supervised practice where it was issued and meets minimum training hours. This does not admit you to the federal exam.
   Time: up to 5 months · Cost: CHF 800–1,200

3. **Ask MEBEKO about the federal diploma**
   MEBEKO decides the conditions for obtaining the federal diploma. Send the form by post with certified copies, never originals.
   Time: up to 5 months · Cost: CHF 800–1,000

4. **Complete a Swiss master's in pharmacy**
   Universities decide admission, study places and how much prior study counts. A MEBEKO decision gives no right to a study place.
   Time: 2–3 years (est.) · Cost: set by university

5. **Pass the federal exam in pharmacy**
   Three parts: written multiple choice, a practical compounding exam and an OSCE. For the 2026 session, registration closed on 31 March 2026.
   Time: 1 session a year (est.)

6. **Receive the federal diploma**
   You are entered in MedReg. To run a pharmacy on your own responsibility you also need a federal postgraduate title and a cantonal licence.
   Time: after passing

Typical total: About 3–5 years (est.)

Language requirements

- MedReg entry: at least B2 in the language of work (German, French or Italian).
- Proof: a CEFR certificate under 6 years old, a degree taught in that language, or 3 years of work in it within the last 10 years.
- Federal exam instructions: Standard German in Basel, Bern and Zürich; French in Geneva.
- MEBEKO accepts documents in German, French, Italian or English.

Read this before you plan

- Licence ≠ visa ≠ job. A MEBEKO decision or MedReg entry gives no right to enter, stay or be hired. Permits are decided by cantonal migration offices and the SEM.
- A MedReg entry of a foreign diploma covers supervised work only. Own-responsibility work needs the federal diploma, a postgraduate title and a cantonal licence.
- Employers must check that a supervised pharmacist is in MedReg and has the language skills needed. Cantonal health authorities decide on supervised employment.

Exams, costs and documents

Checked 20 November 2026

Exam pattern and mode: online, test centre or onsite

Federal exam in pharmacy

ONSITE

- 3 parts, each must be passed
- MC: 150 questions, types A and Kprim
- MC subjects: pharmacotherapy, law and economics
- Practical: compound a medicine in small quantity
- OSCE: 10 stations over at least 2 days

In person at exam sites in Basel, Bern, Zürich (German) and Geneva (French). MC is on site tablets or computers. Not offered online or abroad.

Official fees	Amount
MedReg entry of a foreign diploma For supervised work only. Paid by bank transfer, in one payment.	**CHF 800–1,200**
Request for the federal diploma MEBEKO decision on the conditions for the federal diploma.	**CHF 800–1,000**
Language entry in MedReg Optional but recommended by the BAG.	**CHF 50–100**
Indirect recognition Only if an EU/EFTA state already recognised your diploma and you are a Swiss or EU/EFTA national.	**CHF 800–1,000**
Federal exam and cantonal licence Exam fees are invoiced later; cantonal fees vary. No figure verified.	**not published here**

Fees in Swiss francs (CHF) as published by the BAG in 2026. Tuition, translations, courses and living costs are extra.

Documents usually required

- Completed BAG application form, one per diploma
- Certified copies only, never originals
- Pharmacy diploma and transcript
- Proof the diploma allows practice in the issuing country
- Proof of identity (passport copy)
- CV
- Language certificate at B2 or other accepted proof
- All documents in one postal envelope; email is not accepted

Expected time

- MEBEKO sends an acknowledgement within 1 month by email, then processing currently takes up to 5 months. The BAG says these times are not binding and cannot be sped up.
- Applications are handled in order of arrival. There is no online tracking.
- Federal exam registration for 2026 closed on 31 March 2026. Check the BAG exam page for the next session dates.

Typical total: About 3–5 years (est.)

Three BAG procedures, compared

- MedReg entry: lets you work under supervision. CHF 800–1,200. Does not lead to the federal exam.
- Federal diploma: for pharmacists, a Swiss master's in pharmacy and the federal exam. Request fee CHF 800–1,000.
- Indirect recognition: only if an EU/EFTA state recognised the diploma and you hold Swiss or EU/EFTA nationality, with 3 years of recent clinical work.
- The 36- and 60-month clinical experience routes on the BAG page apply to human medicine only.

Visas, pay and next steps

Checked 20 November 2026

Immigration route (separate from registration)	What official sources say	Status
Work permit, third country (B or L)	Employer-led and capped by annual quotas. 2026: 8,500 permits (4,500 B, 4,000 L). Only for qualified workers, and only if no Swiss, C or B permit holder or EU/EFTA candidate can be recruited. Pay must match local conditions.	Changes yearly
Pharmacists on a shortage list	No official Swiss list was found that eases admission for pharmacists. Normal quota and precedence rules apply.	Confirm
Student permit for a Swiss master's	Needed to study in Switzerland. Apply through the Swiss embassy after university admission. Conditions were not verified for this guide.	Confirm
Schengen short-stay visa (C)	For visits of up to 90 days. It does not allow work as a pharmacist.	Open

If you are applying from Pakistan

- National (D) visas are applied for in person, by appointment only, at the Embassy of Switzerland in Islamabad.
- Appointments: email islamabad.visa@eda.admin.ch with a PDF passport copy and any cantonal authorisation.
- A work entry visa generally needs the cantonal authorisation, the visa D form, passport, ICAO photo and fees.
- Schengen short-stay visas go through visa centres in Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore. They are not for work.
- MEBEKO applications are posted to Bern. There is no exam centre in Pakistan.

Pay and funding

- No official or collective-agreement pay figure for pharmacists was found on federal pages.
- SEM rules say pay must match local, professional and sectoral conditions for a third-country permit.

Avoid these common mistakes

- Expecting a Pakistani PharmD to be recognised. Outside the EU/EFTA it cannot be.
- Applying the doctors' 36- or 60-month experience routes to pharmacy.
- Thinking MedReg entry admits you to the federal exam. It does not.
- Sending originals or emailing documents. Post certified copies in one envelope.
- Assuming a licence brings a permit or a job. Quotas and precedence rules apply.

How ASGHCA supports you

- International Career Mapping: consult, assess, roadmap, prepare
- Documentation and registration guidance
- English test preparation: IELTS, PTE and OET
- 1-on-1 mentorship, CV and interview support
- Webinars, CPD sessions and a lifetime community

ASGHCA offers education and guidance. Regulated immigration advice is referred to authorised professionals.

Official sources, all checked 20 November 2026: MedBG SR 811.11, Arts. 12, 15, 33a, 34, 36 (fedlex.admin.ch) · bag.admin.ch: third-country diploma procedures (FR and DE), MEBEKO, MedReg, Eidgenössische Prüfung in Pharmazie, MEBEKO Richtlinien PHM 2025 · sem.admin.ch: basis for admission to the employment market · admin.ch: Federal Council 2026 quotas · schweiz-pakistan.eda.admin.ch: national visa and work visa documents.

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