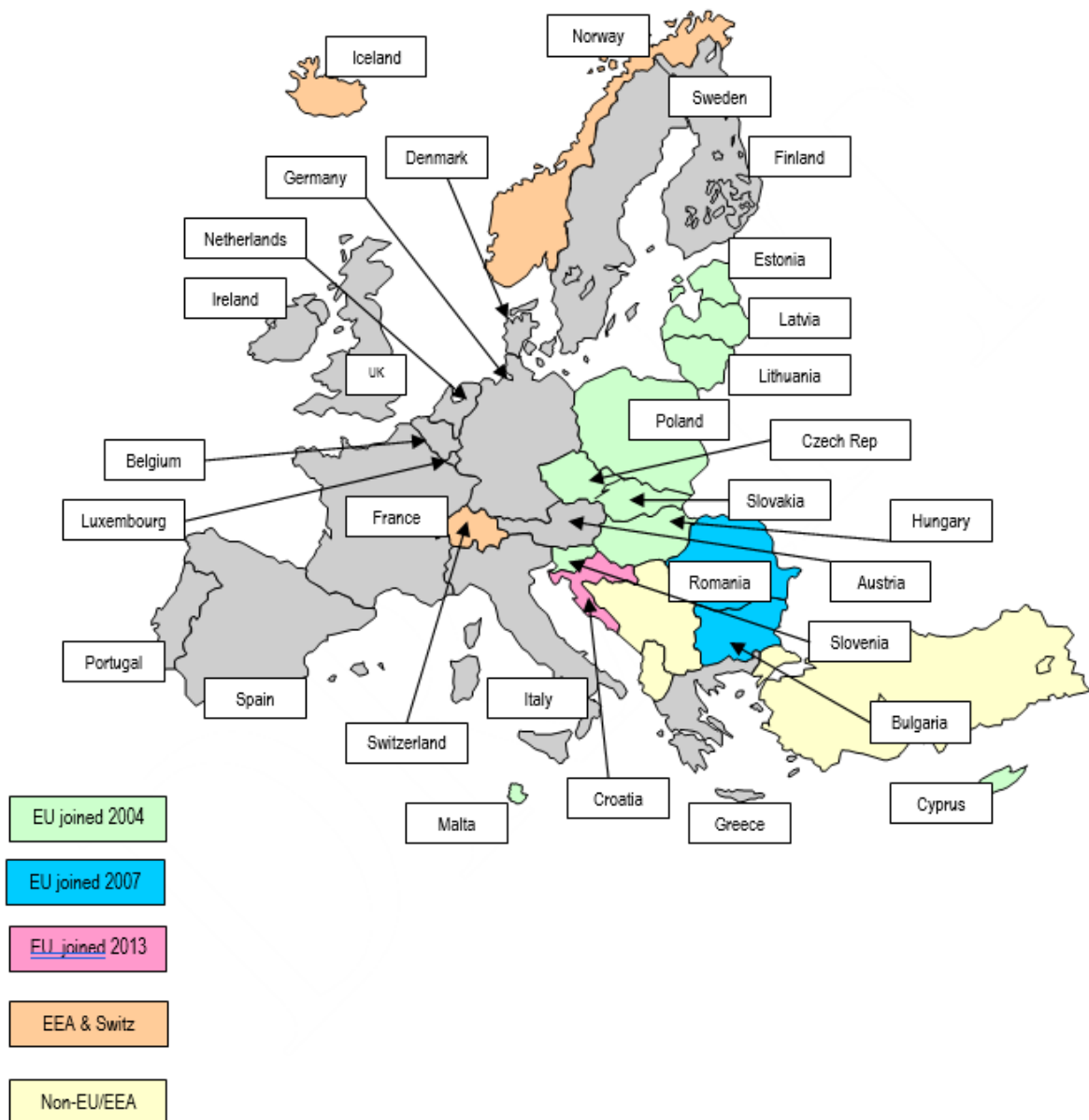
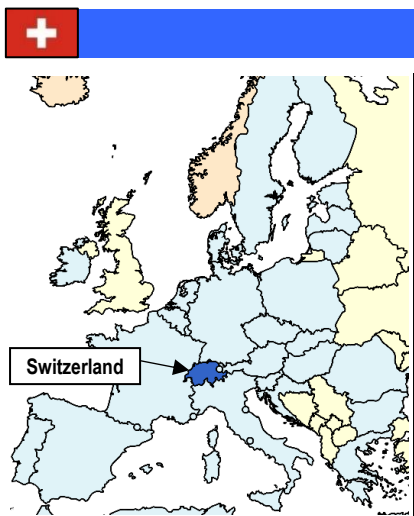


Council of European Dentists

MANUAL OF DENTAL PRACTICE 2026

Switzerland





Switzerland

Link to the EU/EEA	Associate of the EEA/member of the Single Market
Population (2026)	9 131 716
GDP per capita (2023)	94 710
Currency	Swiss Franc (CHF) 0.91 CHF = 1€
Official language	German, French, Italian, Romansh
Healthcare is not publicly funded in Switzerland. The system is highly decentralised, with regional “cantons” playing a key role in the managing and planning of healthcare. A statutory private health insurance is mandatory for all Swiss residents. Basic dental care is not included in the package of benefits of the statutory health insurance. There is a mandatory annual dental check-up covered by some municipalities (“communes”) for children under 16 years old, as well as frequent prevention and dental hygiene campaigns in schools. Voluntary health insurance is common across approximately 30% of the population, covering some level of dental care.	
Number of dentists (active)	4 800
(Active) dentist to population ratio (per 100 000 inhab)	52.5
Members of Dental Association	4 100
4 specialties are recognised: oral surgery, orthodontics, periodontology, reconstructive dental medicine. 5 postgraduates' certificates are delivered by the Swiss Dental Association (SSO). CPD is mandatory. There is an current shortage of dental hygienists.	

Date of last revision: 27 April 2026

Government and healthcare in Switzerland

In Switzerland most public policy is organised at the *cantonal* level of regional governments, through a specific federal system. The central government legislates by the means of a Federal bicameral parliament, with members elected through proportional representation. If supported by substantial numbers in a petition, laws must frequently be approved by referendum to the entire population.

Responsibilities, including about health issues, are divided between three levels of government, including the federal level, the cantonal level (26 cantons), granted with significant autonomy, and the municipal level (2 110 municipalities).

The Swiss private healthcare system is highly decentralised, with regional “cantons” playing a key role in managing and planning of healthcare. The federal government, on the other hand, is responsible for defining the legal framework, as well as funding, quality and safety of medical devices and quality oversight of public health initiatives.

A Federal Health Insurance Law (LaMal) provides a minimum level of universal health coverage to the entire population and covers the identified effects of diseases and accidents. The package of benefits includes consultations, hospital visits, prescribed medication, some preventive and screening check-ups. This statutory health insurance is overseen by the Federal Office of Public Health.

Swiss residents may choose their insurer between multiple private insurance companies (*Kassen*), which are recognised by Federal Office for Social Insurance. The system is established by Federal Law, and beneficiaries pay a basic monthly premium, varying from approximately CHF 4,800 (€5,258) to over CHF 6 000 (€6,572) a year. Following an increase by 4.4%, the average premium was CHF 393.30 per month in 2026 (€430). For those

		Year	Source
% GDP spent on all healthcare	11.7%	2023	FSO
% of healthcare spendings covered by mandatory health insurance premiums	30%	2024	FSO
% of dental care paid out-of-pocket	90%	2026	OECD

on low incomes, the fee is reduced by up to 100%. The reduction is subsidised by Cantonal and Federal taxes and approximately 30% of the Swiss population are eligible. The government also reimburses the cost of treatment for patients on extremely low incomes by providing *Welfare* cover through local authorities.

Health insurance premiums are not based on salary, but are determined by different factors, including annual deductibles (determining the level of co-payments), the canton of residence, the age, and the chosen insurance model.

Statutory health insurance does however not cover any dental care. Children however receive a voucher for an annual dental check-up with a dentist of their choice in some cantons, through compulsory schooling. Exceptions for adults include a very limited list of severe conditions affecting the masticatory system, as well as limited dental care in case of serious accidents. This represents only 10% of all dental care paid by statutory and supplementary insurances.

Voluntary health insurance is common across around 30% of the population. It supports the reimbursement of some level of dental care, up to 50% of costs.

Dental quality oversight is monitored by an evaluation committee of a local section of the Swiss Dental Association (SSO) in each canton.

Education, Training and Registration

Undergraduate Education and Training

Access to dental studies is highly selective and is open to students with a recognised secondary school diploma or Swiss Matura (a *maturité gymnasiale* certificate in Switzerland) or equivalent.

Applications close mid-February.

To enter dental school, students must pass an aptitude test for medical and dental studies at the beginning of July each year (AMS, "test d'aptitude pour les études en médecine", or EMS *Eignungstest für das Medizinstudium*), in cases where the number of applicants is higher than the number of places. A *numerus clausus* is established annually by the Universities of Bern, Zürich and Basel.

Year of data	2025
Number of schools	4
Student intake	120
Number of graduates a year	120
Gender balance (% of female students)	65%
Duration of studies	5

All dental schools in Switzerland are publicly funded and are part of the Faculties of Medicine within the relevant universities. Switzerland offers dental programmes at 4 public universities, located in Geneva, Bern, Basel and Zürich. Programmes are taught in French or German depending on the university.

Foreign nationals must hold a valid Swiss residence permit to be entitled to study in Switzerland.

Dental studies are divided between a bachelor's degree in dental medicine (*Bachelor en médecine dentaire*) with 180 credits, and a master's in dental medicine (*Master en médecine dentaire*), with 120 credits.

The two first years are dedicated to theory without any chairside work, common to students of human medicine, which is then followed by 3 years combining university theory and a high share of practice at university dental clinics.

The responsibility for quality assurance in the faculties is by the University board. Dental schools are accredited by the Swiss Agency for Accreditation and Quality Assurance (AAQ).

Registration

At the completion of studies, all students are required to take two exams, including the Federal Master Examination with a multiple choice test, common to all students, as well as the *Staatsexam* in dentistry (*Examen fédéral de médecine dentaire*), before being granted a licence to practice. This federal exam is however not required for EU-trained dentists.

Cost of registration	0
Yearly SSO* membership fee	1 300 CHF (€1 425)
*Swiss Dental Association	

Membership to the Swiss Dental Association is not mandatory.

Under the Swiss Medical Professions Act, as of 2018, all dentists must automatically register with the Register of Medical Professions (MedReg) under the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) and obtain a licence to practice.

Dentists must also register within their desired canton of practice and residence and then receive their professional licence from this canton, under the Swiss Conference of the Cantonal Ministers of Public Health (GDK).

Recognition of EU and foreign dental diplomas is handled by the FOPH.

Vocational Training (VT)

All graduate dentists must practice as employed dentists for 3 years following graduation before being granted the right to open an individual private practice.

Language requirements

Language proficiency is required at a minimum B2 level in either German, French or Italian depending on the part of Switzerland where the dentist will be practising.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Continuing Professional Development is mandatory for all dentists, with a minimum of 80 hours to be carried out every year (with the equivalent of 1 hours CPD = 1 credit).

A certificate of completion is delivered following each CPD course, showing the program and exact number of hours.

CPD courses are delivered by the Swiss Dental Association (SSO).

Specialist Training Requirements

4 dental specialties are officially recognised by the Ministry of Health and by the SSO in Switzerland. Maxillofacial surgery is recognised as a medical speciality, by the Swiss Medical Association.

- **Oral Surgery** (*Fachzahnarzt für Oralchirurgie*) - 3 years
- **Orthodontics** (*Fachzahnarzt für Kieferorthopädie*) – 4 years
- **Periodontology** (*Fachzahnarzt für Parodontologie*) – 3 years
- **Reconstructive Dental Medicine** (*Fachzahnarzt für Rekonstruktive Zahnmedizin*) – 3 years

5 additional postgraduate specialties, not officially recognised at the federal level, are regulated by the Swiss Dental Association (SSO). Certificates of postgraduate education are also delivered by the SSO.

These include General Oral Dental Medicine, Endodontics, Pedodontics, Oral Implantology, Restorative and Aesthetic Dental Medicine.

Training is provided in dental university centres and at private specialists' practice. Examinations and registration are organised by Schweizerische Zahnärzte-Gesellschaft, in collaboration with the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH).

Dental specialists register under the Register of Medical Professions (MedReg).

Workforce

Dentists

The number of practising dentists in Switzerland has remained stable on average. However, a large majority of dentists receive their training in neighbouring countries, representing approximately three out of four practitioners.

Switzerland currently has a sufficient number of practicing dentists across its territory.

The surplus of dentists, and particularly incoming foreign-trained dentists creates an imbalance in the share of dentists practising in urban, versus rural and mountainous areas. This creates an important pressure from the number of practising dentists on urban areas.

Year of data	2025
Total Registered	5 600
In active practice	4 800
Dentist to population ratio (per 100 000 inhab) *	52.5
Percentage female	39% (currently increasing)
Foreign-trained dentists (EU only)	1 800
*Active dentists only	

Most dentists in private practice are self-employed and earn their living through charging fees for treatments. Almost all are also contracted to treat patients under the social insurance system.

Switzerland has also seen a multiplication of corporate bodies and companies managing and delivering dental care, with no exact federal data on the number of active corporate dental practices. One of the largest Swiss dental chains, Bestsmile, filed for bankruptcy in 2024, with the close of over 30 dental chains across the country.

Most private dental practices remain however composed of one or two general practitioners, supported by chairside assistants, prophylaxis assistants and/or dental hygienists.

Movement of dentists across borders

Switzerland trains an average of 120 dental practitioners a year, with the annual recognition and registration of an additional 400 foreign-trained dentists.

The majority of foreign dentists registered and practising in Switzerland have trained in Germany, France, Italy, and other EU countries.

Specialists

As stated above, there are 4 officially recognised dental specialties in Switzerland, as well as oral maxillofacial surgery recognised as a medical specialty. Referral is not required from general dentists to consult dental specialists.

Year of data	2025
Oral Surgeons	200
Orthodontists	550
Periodontists	~ 90
Reconstructive Dentists	~ 70
Endodontists (as a postgraduate certificate - not a specialty)	~ 20
OMFS	80

Auxiliaries

There are four types of auxiliaries in Switzerland, including dental hygienists, dental technicians, dental chairside assistants and prophylaxis assistants.

According to the Swiss Dental Association (SSO), Switzerland is facing a growing shortage of dental hygienists, as well as difficulties in recruiting dental assistants, to a smaller degree. The SSO is therefore working towards expanding the scope of work of prophylaxis assistants, under continued supervision, to help bridge the gap in dental hygiene services.

Year of data	2025
Technicians	NA
Chairside assistants	NA
Prophylaxis assistants	NA
Hygienists	~ 2 100

Data is unavailable for the categories of dental auxiliaries above.

Dental Technicians

Technicians train for 4 years in dental technician laboratories as a VET qualification (Federal Vocational Education and Training). A federal registerable qualification is required in some cantons. Dental technicians' duties are the construction of prostheses. They are not allowed to work in the mouths of patients. They normally work in commercial laboratories and receive fees for appliances. A few work in practices for a salary.

Dental Chairside Assistants

The vocational training for a chairside assistant is 3 years, with a dual educational system in dental practices and specialised schools, with a final examination for qualification. This education is federally recognised. They do not have to register. There is an estimated 1.5 to 2 practising chairside assistant per dentist.

Dental Prophylaxis Assistants (Prophylaxeassistentin/en)

Prophylaxis assistants in Switzerland are dental chairside assistants who have carried out further training in specialized schools. They must carry out a minimum 11-month training in a private dental office, with the treatment of at least 150 patients before being entitled to practice.

They focus on preventive care and hygiene and may work directly on patients, in comparison with chairside assistants.

They are trained by dental practitioners that are members of the Swiss Dental Association (SSO) but are not registered under the Association. Most work with dentists in private practices, although some may also be employed in the public dental service.

Dental Hygienists

Hygienists train for 3 years, representing 5 400 hours of study, in specialised higher education institutions and obtain a PET (Federal Professional Education and Training) diploma course in dental hygiene.

For dental assistants already holding a Swiss VET diploma, only 4 500 hours is necessary.

Students may train in 4 different colleges (in Bern, two colleges based in Zurich, or Geneva), following the obtention of a secondary school diploma or equivalent.

Dental Hygienists may work independently in Switzerland. In 13 cantons they may be self-employed and accept money from patients.

Hygienists must register with the relevant local health authority only if they intend to practice independently. However, less than 10% practice independently.

Their duties include scaling and simple gum treatment and oral health instruction, and the insertion of preventive sealants. In some cantons they are permitted to administer local anaesthetics.

Other Useful Information

Main national associations

National dental associations and information centres	
Swiss Dental Association (SSO) - Schweizerische Zahnärzte-Gesellschaft Société Suisse des médecines-dentistes (SSO) Società Svizzera Odontoiatri	Swiss Dental Students Association (SDSA)
Thunstrasse 7, Postfach, 3001 Bern Switzerland Tel.: + 41 / 31 313 31 31 Email: sekretariat@sso.ch Website: http://www.sso.ch	3011 Bern Switzerland Contact page: https://dentalstudents.ch/en/contact/ Website : https://dentalstudents.ch/

Competent authorities

Swiss Conference of the Cantonal Ministers of Public Health (GDK/CDS)	Placement Service for dental professionals
Conférence des directrices et directeurs cantonaux de la santé (CDS) Maison des Cantons Speichergasse 6 Case postale CH-3001 Bern Switzerland Phone : +41 (0)31 356 20 20 Email : office@gdk-cds.ch Website: https://www.gdk-cds.ch/fr/	SSO-Stellenvermittlung Thunstrasse 7 Postfach 3001 Bern Switzerland Phone: +41 313 31 41 Fax: +41 313 31 40 Email: jobs@sso.ch Online service and job portal: https://www.sso-jobs.ch/de/job-finden
Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH)	Federal Social Insurance Office
Schwarzenburgstrasse 157 3003 Bern Switzerland Phone: +41 58 462 21 11 Email: info@bag.admin.ch Website: https://www.bag.admin.ch/en	Effingerstrasse 20 3003 Bern Switzerland Phone: +41 58 462 90 11 Website: https://www.bsv.admin.ch/en
Swiss Agency of Accreditation and Quality Assurance (AAQ)	
Schwanengasse 9 P.O. Box 3001 Bern Switzerland Phone: +41 31 380 11 50 Email: info@aaq.ch Website: www.aaq.ch	

Main Professional Journal
Swiss Dental Journal SSO
Principle Contact Michael M. Bornstein, Editor-in-Chief University of Basel, Switzerland
Support Contact Editorial office, Swiss Dental Association SSO Phone: +41 31 310 20 88 Email: kommunikation@sso.ch Website: https://www.swissdentaljournal.org/index

Dental Schools:

Public Universities	
University of Geneva - Medical Faculty - University Clinic of Dental Medicine <i>Clinique Universitaire de Médecine Dentaire (CUMD)</i> For student matters (student secretariat) : CMU - Av. de Champel 7, Bâtiment B, 3e étage 1206 Geneva Switzerland Phone (Bachelor): +41 22 379 40 91 Phone (Master's): +41 22 379 40 90 Email (Bachelor): Stephanie.Bagnoud@unige.ch Email (Master's): marie-christine.ferlito@unige.ch University Clinic : 19 rue Lombard 1205 Geneva Switzerland Phone : +41 22 379 40 00 Email : info-cumcd@unige.ch Website: https://www.unige.ch/medecine/dentaire/ Dentists graduating each year: 34	University of Zurich – Center for Dentistry <i>(Zentrum für Zahnmedizin)</i> University of Zurich Center for Dentistry Plattenstrasse 11 8032 Zurich Tel: +41 01 634 33 11 Fax +41 (0)44 634 43 11 For study matters, all contact details can be found here: https://www.zzm.uzh.ch/de/studenten/studiensekretariat.html website: www.zzm.uzh.ch Dentists graduating each year: 33
University of Basel – Faculty of Medicine – Dental Medicine University of Basel Student Administration Office Petersplatz 1, Postfach 4001 Basel Switzerland Phone: +41 61 207 30 23 Contact form: https://www.unibas.ch/en/Student-Administration-Office-Enquiry.html Website: https://www.unibas.ch/en/Studies/Before-My-Studies/Application-Admission/Admission/Medicine-Dental-Medicine.html Dentists graduating each year: 28	University of Bern – School of Dental Medicine <i>Zahnmedizinische Kliniken</i> Zahnmedizinische Kliniken der Universität Bern Freiburgstrasse 7 3010 Bern Switzerland Phone (general): +41 31 684 06 00 Phone (studies): +41 31 684 07 75 Email (studies): ursula.bircher@unibe.ch website: www.zmk.unibe.ch Dentists graduating each year: 30