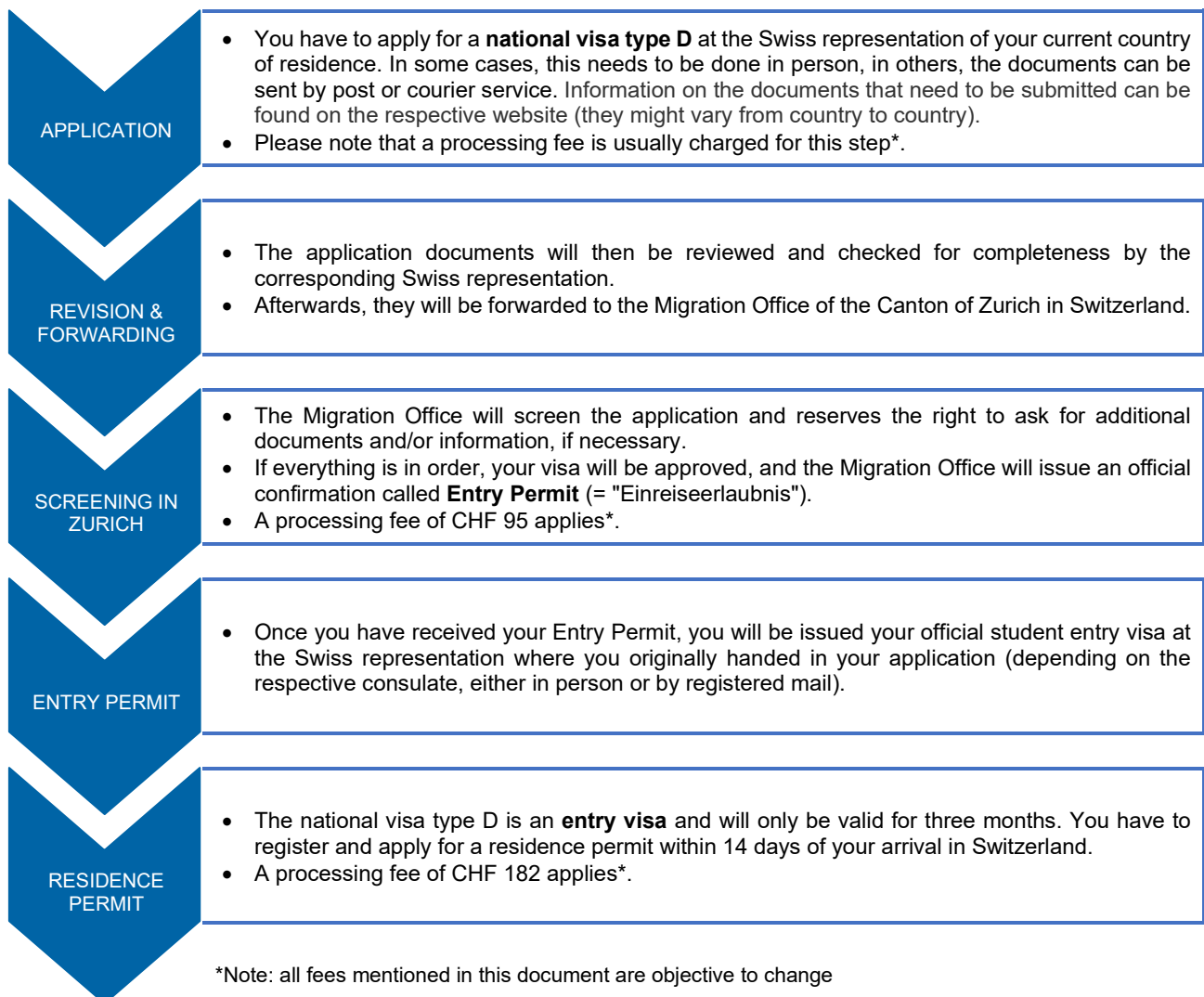


## Visa Guidelines for Non-EU Exchange Students

All the information in this sheet is provided without liability, as the regulations on the following pages might have changed since the last review of this document. For legally binding information, please consult [the website of the State Secretariat for Migration \(SEM\)](#) or contact [the Swiss representation in your home country](#) (scroll to the bottom of the page and choose your country).

As a Non-EU incoming student staying in Switzerland for more than 90 days, you need to apply for a **student entry visa (national visa type D)** at the Swiss Embassy or Consulate General of your current country of residence. **Please start the application as soon as possible, as the whole process may take up to three months.**

### Visa application process steps at a glance



## Documents to be submitted

Please note that the visa application procedure and the required documents can vary from country to country, or even between Swiss consulates within one country, therefore, we cannot guarantee the completeness of the information provided below. For the specific and most recent requirements that apply in your individual case, you can contact the responsible Swiss representation or refer to the [visa requirement website](#) of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA).

It is crucial that you include all required documents with your visa application, as missing papers can cause a delay of several weeks.

Usually, the following standard documents are required from all students, but again, this is not a finalised list:

- / **Completed and signed visa application form**
- / **Copy of your passport (first page with your personal data and picture)**
- / **Several recent passport sized photographs**
- / **Invitation or acceptance letter (study confirmation, issued by the International Office)**  
A printout of the PDF file is usually accepted, however, if an original hard copy is required, please let us know and we will send the document to the international office of your home university in due time.
- / **Proof of sufficient financial means**  
The migration authorities require a financial statement (confirming an amount of CHF 1,750/month, or CHF 21'000/per year) as proof that you will be able to cover the expenses for your stay. The amount needs to be indicated either in Swiss francs, Euros or US dollars. Additionally, it is very important that the account is **in your name** (statements in your parents' names will not be accepted) and **by a bank that is either:**
  - A Swiss bank (location irrelevant)
  - A foreign bank with at least one branch located in Switzerland, the account can also be in a branch located in your home country

The Swiss Financial Market Supervisory Authority FINMA provides [a list of all accepted banks](#), more information about bank authorisation can be found on [their website](#).

If you cannot provide proof of sufficient financial means, the only alternative is a so-called Declaration of Sponsorship that applies if you have a private sponsor that lives in Switzerland (Swiss citizen or foreigner with B or C permit), for instance a relative or another acquaintance. The sponsor/guarantor guarantees to cover various costs during your stay, such as living expenses, accidents or illness or the return trip. The corresponding form cannot be downloaded in advance and will be sent to the applicant by the responsible Migration Office directly. However, an approved declaration of sponsorship does not entitle you to a visa.

## Entry Permit and Entry Visa

Once you have submitted your visa application including all relevant documents, it will be forwarded to the Migration Office in Zurich. Please note that you may be asked to provide additional data and/or documents.

If your visa is approved, the Migration Office will issue an **Entry Permit**. With it, you can pick up your official student entry visa at the **Swiss embassy or Consulate General where you originally submitted your application**, depending on your nationality and country of residence, this has to be done either in person or by registered mail. Therefore, please keep in mind that you might need to send in your passport and will not have it for a certain amount of time.

As the visa only entitles you to enter Switzerland, it will just be valid for three months. After you have arrived, you need to register and apply for a residence permit at the registration office of the municipality (= Gemeinde) you live in within 14 days. The International Office will provide more information on this process during the Welcome Event.

**Under no circumstances are you to enter Switzerland on a tourist visa. It is illegal and you will not receive a residence permit if you do so.**

## Important to know

Please note that **there is no guarantee for a visa** and the application can be rejected by the responsible Migration Office for whatever reasons and on a case-by-case basis. For more information on entry requirements, please refer to the [Migration Office Zurich](#) (unfortunately, this website is only available in German). If the application is rejected the fee will not be reimbursed – the same applies if you withdraw the application.

In case you encounter any problems with your visa application, there is the possibility to give us, as your host institution, your authorisation to receive information from the migration authorities in Zurich. If you need to make use of this offer, please contact us by e-mail: [international.lsfm@zhaw.ch](mailto:international.lsfm@zhaw.ch).

And again, please bear in mind that the Swiss embassy or Consulate General in your country may have individual requirements and we can therefore not provide any liability for the contents of this document. If in doubt, always consult the responsible Swiss representation directly.

## Contact International Office

If you have any questions, please contact us.

**Cornelia Soland**  
Head International Office  
+41 58 934 5979  
[cornelia.soland@zhaw.ch](mailto:cornelia.soland@zhaw.ch)

**Nadine Jacomet**  
Student Exchange Coordinator Incoming  
+41 58 934 5163  
[nadine.jacomet@zhaw.ch](mailto:nadine.jacomet@zhaw.ch)