



Recognition of foreign professional qualifications to work as a licensed land surveyor in Switzerland

Information sheet

Version: March 2018

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You can find all the mentioned legal bases here: <https://www.cadastre.ch/en/about/law.html>

For better readability, only the masculine form is used.

You hold a foreign professional qualification as a land surveyor and would like to work in the cadastral surveying field in Switzerland?

The first step is to determine whether the professional activity that you wish to carry out in the field of cadastral surveying in Switzerland is regulated¹. Not all professional activities in this field are regulated.

1 What cadastral surveying activities in Switzerland are regulated?

Regulated professional activities are clearly and conclusively defined in the Federal Act of 5 October 2007 on Geoinformation (Geoinformation Act)² and in the Ordinance of 18 November 1992 on Official Cadastral Surveying³:

Federal Act of 5 October 2007 on Geoinformation (Geoinformation Act, GeolA) SR 510.62

Art. 41 Licensed land surveyors

¹ Licensed land surveyors who have successfully completed the federal state examinations and **who are registered in the Register of Licensed Land Surveyors are authorised to perform independent (self-employed) work in the field of cadastral surveying.**

Ordinance of 18 November 1992 on Official Cadastral Surveying (OCS) SR 211.432.2

Art. 25 Updating and the land register

¹ The Land Registrar may enter a subdivision or amalgamation of properties or of area-related distinct and permanent rights (easements) in the land register only on presentation of the **deed of mutation signed by the responsible registered surveyor.**

Art. 37 Certified extracts

¹ **Extracts from the official data of cadastral surveying** in analogue (hard copy) or digital form whose conformance to the definitive data of official cadastral surveying has been **authenticated by a registered surveyor are described as certified extracts.**

Art. 40 Specialist agency of the Confederation

¹ The **Federal Directorate of Cadastral Surveying** is the competent technical agency of the Confederation. The **FDCS is under the direction of a registered surveyor.**

Section 2: Cantonal Surveying

Art. 42

¹ The **canton** designates the agency (surveying supervision service) responsible for the supervision of official cadastral surveying. **This agency will be directed by a registered surveyor.**

Art. 44 Entitlement to execution of the work

¹ The cantons supervise the execution of the work **by registered surveyors** and other technical staff qualified in surveying, **by means of contracts and administrative orders.** Article 46 is reserved.

² The cantons may delegate work on the **'control points', 'landownership', 'local names', 'territorial boundaries', 'permanent landslip areas (land subject to continuous movement)' and 'administrative subdivisions'** information layers and the **updating and maintenance of official cadastral surveying data** only to:

- a. communes, or other public bodies or legal entities under public law **that have their own surveying office under the direction of a registered surveyor;**
- b. **registered surveyors**

Since other activities not mentioned above are not regulated, there is no need to obtain a listing in the Register of Licensed Land Surveyors. Such work may also be carried out without recognition of foreign professional qualifications, i.e. directly on the basis of the foreign qualification. This concerns in particular salaried employment with a registered surveyor or all activities that are carried out by land surveyors in Switzerland.

¹ For the purposes of Directive 2005/36/EC, all professions whose pursuit requires certain professional qualifications are considered regulated. The Directive defines only what is meant by regulated profession. It is up to the individual countries to determine which professions are regulated on their territory.

² GeolG, SR 510.62

³ OCS, SR 211.432.2

2 What recognition procedure do I have to go through?

2.1 Activities that are not regulated under GeolA und OCS

If you do not wish to pursue any of the listed professional activities on a self-employed basis, as an EU and EFTA citizen you generally do not require recognition of your professional qualification. It is up to future employers to decide whether to hire you.

If you still wish to obtain recognition of the professional qualification obtained in your home country or obtain a level certificate indicating how your professional qualification is positioned within the Swiss education system (e.g. to facilitate contacts with employers), you may submit an application via SERI's online portal (www.sbf.admin.ch/becc). When you are prompted to enter the corresponding Swiss profession or field of study (DE/FR/IT/EN), you must manually enter 'Level certificate' or 'Exemption recommendation for unregulated work in an engineering office' so that the system does not automatically refer you to the Federal Commission for Cadastral Surveyors.

Depending on the type of qualification that you hold, you will either receive confirmation from SERI or a recommendation from swissuniversities. Your file will be forwarded directly to one of these two authorities. You do not need to take any further action.

2.2 Regulated professional activities

2.2.1 Rendered under GeolA and OCS as a service provider (max. 90 days per calendar year)

If you wish to work in Switzerland as a self-employed service provider for 90 days per calendar year, you must first register via the [online platform](#) of the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI). Use the declaration tool to create your application file. As soon as your application file is complete, SERI will forward it to the Federal Commission for Cadastral Surveyors for assessment. This body will determine whether compensatory courses are needed with regard to your professional qualification. To verify that these compensatory courses have been taken, you will then be required to take an aptitude test.

2.2.2 Rendered under GeolA and OCS upon establishment in Switzerland

If you wish to settle in Switzerland and carry out one of the activities listed in section 1, you must obtain recognition of your foreign professional qualification directly from the Federal Commission for Cadastral Surveyors.

2.2.3 What does the recognition procedure entail?

The Federal Commission for Cadastral Surveyors is responsible for assessing recognition applications. It decides whether the foreign professional qualification is sufficient to carry out a regulated professional activity in Switzerland and whether the qualification holder can be listed in the Register of Licensed Land Surveyors.

On the basis of the documents submitted and the applicant's professional experience, the Federal Commission for Cadastral Surveyors will decide whether compensatory courses are needed in each individual case. It will then make the necessary arrangements for an aptitude test to be taken and will assess the results.

The following minimum compensatory courses are normally required, as they are not provided as part of training abroad:

	Service provider	Person establishing him/herself in Switzerland
Surveying in Switzerland Article 4 paragraph 1 letter d SurvO (SR 211.432.261)	X	X
Land management Article 4 paragraph 1 letter e SurvO	X	X
Swiss legislation Article 4 paragraph 1 letter f SurvO	X	X
Company management: business administration in Switzerland Article 4 paragraph 2 letter g, Ziff. 1 SurvO		X
Geography of Switzerland Article 4 paragraph 2 letter c SurvO		X
Swiss history and political system Article 4 paragraph 2 letter d SurvO		X

2.2.4 Knowledge of languages

The applicant must provide proof that he/she has the level of language proficiency necessary for practising the profession before commencement of work in Switzerland (Article 53 of Directive 2005/36/EC).

	Service provider	Person establishing him/herself in Switzerland
First national language Article 4 paragraph 2 letter a SurvO	X	
First and second national language Article 4 paragraph 2 letters a and b SurvO		X

3 What do I need to know about compensatory courses?

Test venue

All tests are held on the premises of the Federal Office of Topography (swisstopo), Seftigenstrasse 264, 3084 Wabern, Switzerland.

Test content

Test content is based on material covered in the state examination for land surveyors: www.cadas-tre.ch > Amtliche Vermessung > Ingenieur-Geometer/innen > Geometerpatent > Staatsexamen > Dokumentation.

Test session, duration of test

Written test questions

The written test questions will only be given in German and French. However, candidates may provide answers in Italian if desired.

Written documentation may be used during the test, exceptions (e.g. multiple-choice questions) will be announced on a case-per-case basis. However, exchange of verbal, written, electronic or online information is not permitted.

The test should be an individual achievement of the candidate. The use of external help by means of data exchange or the involvement third parties is not permitted and will be punished. Special emphasis is placed on the quality and presentation of reports and documentation

Verbal test questions each take around 45 to 60 minutes.

The test will consist of a discussion in German, French or Italian, depending on the candidate's choice. No documents may be consulted during this part of the test.

Test fees

The test fee is calculated according to Article 35 paragraph 1 SurvO. Payment must be made before the test is taken.

Test outcome

The candidate will be notified in writing of the test outcome.

4 Listing in the Register of Licensed Land Surveyors

After successful completion of the aptitude test, the qualification holder's name is entered into Register of Licensed Land Surveyors.

The fee for entry into the register is determined under Article 36 SurvO. Authorisation for service providers wishing to work in Switzerland for no more than 90 days per calendar year and for those establishing themselves in Switzerland shall go into effect on the day after receipt of payment.