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Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Economic Affairs,
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**State Secretariat for Education,
Research and Innovation SERI**

Education, Research and Innovation in Switzerland: Timeline

(Updated: January 2020)

The following timeline shows the development of education, research and innovation in Switzerland from the Confederation's perspective, providing an overview of how the current system came into being.

1460	**The University of Basel, Switzerland's oldest university, is founded** The University of Geneva was founded in 1559. The remaining Swiss universities were established much later, in the 19th and 20th centuries. They followed the ideas of Wilhelm von Humboldt from their inception.
1500 - 1800	**The age of natural scientists and universal scholars** Scientific research in Switzerland began in the 16th century, mainly in the fields of natural science and general scholarship, with Paracelsus, Leonhard Euler and Albrecht von Haller as some of the more well-known names. For the period between 1500 and 1800, there is evidence that nearly 190 science scholars in Switzerland; over 70% of these were active in the 18th century.
1815	**The Swiss Natural Science Society ('Societé Helvétique des Sciences Naturelles') is founded** This society was the precursor of the Swiss Academy of Sciences (SCNAT, since 1988). From the mid-20th century, several sister societies were founded: the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences (SAMS, 1943), the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences (SAHS, 1946) and the Swiss Academy of Engineering Sciences (SATW, 1981). These four academies joined forces in 2006, to form the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences.
1848	**The federal state is founded** When the federal state was founded in 1848, the first Federal Constitution came into force. This stated that the cantons were responsible for organising general schooling in Switzerland and were required to ensure 'sufficient primary education'. The Confederation took on responsibility for vocational education and training and for parts of tertiary education. Under Article 22 of the 1848 Constitution, the Confederation was given the authority to found a federal university.
1855	**The ETH Zurich is founded** The Federal Polytechnic School of Zurich, opened in 1855 and upgraded to the status of Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in 1911, was founded in response to two main factors: the creation of the Swiss federal state in 1848 and the rapidly growing need – in the wake of industrialisation – for technical and scientific education at university level. Original proposals to found a federal university were resisted by the cantons and so came to nothing; however, a federal polytechnic based in Zurich was established.

1874	**Primary education is made compulsory** The Federal Constitution was revised in 1874, introducing compulsory primary education. The minimum schooling required by the cantonal school laws and curricula could take place legally either at a public school, private school or at home. The cantons could decide whether schools could be set up by private sponsors alongside public institutions. 'State run' meant that school inspections were conducted by the communal and cantonal authorities.
1888	**The Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property is founded** This institute, headquartered in Bern, is responsible for all matters relating to intellectual property in Switzerland. In 1996 it became an organisation incorporated under public law.
1897	**The Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK) is founded** In 1897, the cantonal education directors, who had hitherto met on an ad hoc basis, consolidated their meetings into a permanent and structured conference. The EDK became a platform for sharing opinions and experiences in education policy, for joint decisions and undertakings, and dialogue with the federal government. Today it comprises the representatives of Switzerland's 26 cantonal government responsible for education, culture and sport. Its current legal basis is the School Coordination Agreement of 1970, which was created because of the increasing need for greater coordination in education policy in the 1960s.
1906	**First federal ordinance on the baccalaureate issued** Following the foundation of the Federal Baccalaureate Commission in 1891, in 1906 the first federal ordinance on the baccalaureate was issued. After several years of consultation, in 1925 the Academic Baccalaureate Recognition Ordinance was issued, offering three different types of baccalaureate: Types A (Classics-Humanities with Latin and Greek), B (Classics-Humanities with Latin and English) and C (Mathematics-Natural Sciences). When revised in 1972, the Ordinance also officially recognised Types D (Modern Languages) and E (Economic Sciences).
1909	**First Swiss Nobel Laureate: Emil Theodor Kocher, Professor of Surgery at the University of Bern** Twenty-three Swiss scientists have received Nobel Prizes in Science (Physics, Chemistry and Medicine) to date (2019). Switzerland has also received several Nobel Prizes for Literature and for Peace.
1930	**The first Federal Act on Vocational Education and Training ('Bundesgesetz über die berufliche Ausbildung', BbA) is passed** This Act applied to training in the fields of commerce and transport, as well as in trades and the industrial sector, including the hospitality industry and cottage industries. Vocational education and training really took off a few years later, after the end of World War II. The Swiss vocational system is characterised by its dual-track system of theory and practice, and the fact that education and training are closely coordinated with existing labour market needs. Education and training takes place primarily in companies and vocational schools.

1944	**The Commission for the Promotion of Scientific Research ('Kommission zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung', KWF) is founded** The origins of the KWF can be found in the federal decree on preparatory measures for the purpose of crisis management and job creation, which had come into force in 1934. This decree stated that industry-related research could receive public funding. Two further Federal Council decrees in 1942 and 1943 allowed for federal funding of research projects that would lead, either directly or indirectly, to the creation of new jobs. The KWF, composed of representatives from federal government, the private sector and academia, was founded to review grant applications. The KWF later changed its name to the Commission for Technology and Innovation (CTI), which then became the Swiss Innovation Agency (Innosuisse) in 2018.
1945	**A Nuclear Energy Study Commission ('Studienkommission für Atomenergie', SKA) is founded** In Switzerland, nuclear research first began after World War I, primarily at the ETH Zurich's Department of Physics under the leadership of Professor Paul Scherrer (1890-1969). In 1945 he became head of the SKA, when the Federal Council created this body to commission scientific studies into the use of nuclear energy. Furthermore, the SKA could award extensive research grants, benefiting universities and the ETH Zurich especially. This study commission was disbanded in 1958.
1949	**Switzerland joins UNESCO** The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) is a UN specialised agency founded in 1945. Its purpose is to promote international collaboration in education, sciences and culture in order to foster peace and security. UNESCO has a range of programmes which act primarily as 'ideas laboratories'; in the 1960s, for example, the organisation came up with the concept of 'life-long learning'. UNESCO is also active in setting standards, as a forum for the international exchange of ideas and as a consulting agency.
1952	**The Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) is founded** The SNSF was founded as a government-supported, private foundation. In contrast to the practice-oriented Commission for the Promotion of Scientific Research (KWF, which would later become Innosuisse in 2018), it was set up primarily to fund and promote basic research in universities. The SNSF contributes substantially to today's research landscape in Switzerland.
1953	**Switzerland becomes founding member of CERN** The Confederation started supporting research at universities by signing international treaties to contribute to – and often financially participate in – international research organisations and programmes. Switzerland was a founding member in many of these cases. This era of research cooperation started with Switzerland's participation in CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research (now the European Laboratory for Particle Physics) in Geneva. Switzerland is also a founding member and its host state. Today, CERN is the world's largest research centre for particle physics.
1958	**Switzerland appoints its first science attaché** Switzerland sent its first science attaché to Washington D.C. in 1958. Switzerland currently has a network of almost 30 science and technology councillors who are active in 20 countries (as at early 2018). These councillors abroad are either employees of the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation, or scientific attachés at Swiss embassies. Together with the five swissnex locations, they form the 'swissnex network' – Switzerland's global network for education, research and innovation.

1961	**Switzerland joins the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)** The Convention establishing the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) entered into force. Switzerland was among the 20 parties to the Convention. The OECD serves as a platform for member states to evaluate and improve their policies in the areas of economics, finance, education and science, social affairs, the environment and development. It gives them a say in the development of international standards and provides a forum for systemic and inter-institutional learning. Over the years, Switzerland has participated in various country studies, including those on vocational education and training.
1961	**Federal Commission for Scholarships for Foreign Students (FCS) is established** At the proposal of the Conference of Rectors of Higher Education Institutions, and with the agreement of the Cantonal Directors of Education of the university cantons, the Federal Council submitted to Parliament a dispatch on introducing scholarships for foreign students in Switzerland. The main arguments put forward in favour of such scholarships related to development policy and cultural policy. In March 1961 Switzerland introduced a system of government scholarships for foreign researchers and art students. Applications for these scholarships can be submitted via Swiss embassies abroad, and the selection procedure is conducted in Switzerland by the Federal Commission for Scholarships for Foreign Students (FCS). In 2012, the Confederation ceased to fund preparatory courses for university degrees in Fribourg in favour of expanding the scholarship programme to over 180 countries worldwide.
1962	**Switzerland joins the European Space Research Organisation (ESRO)** Switzerland was one of the founding members of the European Space Research Organisation (ESRO) based in Paris. ESRO constructed satellites that were launched into orbit from the USA. In 1975 it was became part of the European Space Agency ESA.
1963	**Switzerland joins the Council of Europe** Founded in 1949, the Strasbourg-based Council of Europe is primarily committed to the defence of human rights, parliamentary democracy and the rule of law. It is committed to promoting education systems which prepare people not only for their working lives but also for life as an active citizen in a democratic society. The Council of Europe's education policy programme is based on the European Cultural Convention and the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region.
1965	**The Swiss Science Council (SSC) is founded** With the number people enrolling in universities skyrocketing in the 1960s (shift from ‘elite universities’ to broader access to higher learning), along with increasing costs in science and medicine, federal funding for the cantonal universities became vital. In 1965, Parliament passed a bill that would form the basis for the future Higher Education Promotion Act. As a consequence, the Federal Council needed a permanent advisory body for all questions related to university and research policy, and so the Swiss Science Council (SSC). In the year 2000, the SSC became the Swiss Science and Technology Council (SSTC), later changing its name to Swiss Science and innovation Council (SSIC) in 2014 and back to the Swiss Science Council (SSC) in 2018.

1967	**The parliamentary Science, Education and Culture Committee (SECC) is established** The increased importance of science and research led Parliament to form another permanent legislative committee, the SECC. Today, the SECC deals with issues concerning education (e.g. promoting education and education research, training and further training); research, technology and innovation (e.g. promoting research and innovation, technology impact assessments, research ethics); and linguistic and cultural support.
1968	**The Federal Higher Education Promotion Act ('Hochschulförderungsgesetz', HFG) is passed** After more than 100 years of trying to achieve a basis for ongoing funding of cantonal universities by the federal government, the HFG finally came into force in 1969. The HFG introduced two forms of funding: • Basic contributions to support general university activities – teaching and research • Investments for financing construction and equipment From its inception, achieving better coordination between all universities was a key concern addressed by this act. The Swiss University Conference – a joint body of university funders, including the federal government – was established for this purpose. While this conference was a consultative body in accordance with the Constitution, it did have considerable political weight, as it was the first platform for continuous discussion at national level of issues relating to higher education policy.
1969	**The EPFL becomes part of the Federal Institutes of Technology Domain** The Ecole polytechnique de l'Université de Lausanne broke away from the University of Lausanne and became the Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL). Together with the ETH Zurich, the EPFL is part of the ETH Domain and is run directly by the Confederation. All other Swiss universities are under cantonal authority.
1969	**The Science and Research Division of the Federal Department of Home Affairs (FDHA) is established** The federal government responded to the increase in tasks within the higher education and research sectors by creating the Science and Research Division within the FDHA. This division became the Federal Office for Science and Research from 1973, and was renamed the Federal Office for Education and Science (FOES) in 1979.
1969	**Switzerland joins the European Molecular Biology Conference (EMBC) in Heidelberg, Germany** The EMBC provides a framework for European cooperation in the field of molecular biology. It supports training and the exchange of information between European researchers. Since 1973 Switzerland has contributed to the European Molecular Biology Laboratory, which has sites in Heidelberg, Hinxton (UK), Hamburg, Grenoble, Rome and Barcelona. Swiss researchers benefit from the EMBC's scholarship programme and are involved in the organisation's other activities.
1970	**Switzerland joins the Mediterranean Science Commission ('Commission internationale pour l'exploration scientifique de la mer Méditerranée'), CIESM in Monaco** The CIESM was founded by countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea with the aim of promoting scientific cooperation by giving other countries access to national research stations. Being a landlocked country, Switzerland benefits greatly from cooperation in CIESM. CIESM conducts research in the marine sciences. Its main objectives include gaining a better understanding of processes that cause changes in the Mediterranean Sea.

1970	**School Coordination Agreement introduced** The School Coordination Agreement of 1970, which all cantons except Ticino had joined by 2001, was an important legal instrument to unify the cantonal school systems. The signatory cantons formed an inter-cantonal public-law institution to promote the education system and harmonise the cantonal laws on education. They agreed to cooperate over educational planning and research and in gathering school statistics, both among themselves and with the federal government. The EDK became responsible for specific tasks, such as submitting recommendations for framework curricula or teaching materials.
1971	**Switzerland joins the intergovernmental European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) framework in Brussels, Belgium** In the 1970s, European research cooperation was systematically expanded with the launch of COST Actions (European Cooperation in the Field of Scientific and Technical Research) and the creation of the European Science Foundation. COST promotes networking between nationally funded research activities. Today, it comprises 30 member states, including Switzerland.
1973	**A new article on research is added to the Constitution** The clear result of the popular vote of 4 March 1973 in favour of a new article on research in the Federal Constitution (Art. 27 ^{sexies} of the then Federal Constitution) created a constitutional basis for the Confederation's existing obligations in research policy. This article also made it possible for federal research promotion to be both expanded and better coordinated. On the same day, a second proposal submitted to the People failed to achieve a cantonal majority. This proposed education article would have led to a total restructuring of education in Switzerland – from preschool to university levels, as well as vocational education and training and adult education. As this proposal was not accepted, education remained, to a large extent, within the purview of the cantons. The constitutional provisions on education remained unchanged until 2006, when an article on the education framework ('Bildungsrahmenartikel') was written into the Constitution.
1974	**The first National Research Programmes (NRPs) are launched** With the introduction of the National Research Programmes, the federal government also began funding research on a thematic basis. The NRPs involve research projects aimed at solving specific current issues. Topics can be proposed by federal offices, research institutions and groups, or even individuals. The Federal Council then decides on the topics and commissions the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) to conduct the projects.
1975	**Switzerland joins the European Space Agency (ESA) in Paris** Switzerland is one of the founding members of the ESA. Intergovernmental cooperation in the ESA has given Europe independent access to space exploration. What is more, Europe is gradually gaining autonomous expertise in space science and technologies, as well as in services such as meteorology, telecommunications and navigation. Swiss universities, research and businesses all benefit from this ESA membership. Switzerland is also active in other European and international space projects.
1979	**The Federal Office for Education and Science (FOES) established** Founded in 1973, the Federal Office for Science and Research was renamed the Federal Office for Education and Science (FOES).

1979	**Switzerland becomes an associated country in the nuclear fusion research programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) in Luxembourg** In 1978, Switzerland and Euratom signed a treaty to cooperate in the fields of controlled thermonuclear fusion and plasma physics. Both parties agreed to work together in various research programmes and joint actions. This treaty laid the foundation for Switzerland's current associated country status in the Euratom programme.
1981	**Switzerland joins the European Southern Observatory (ESO) in Garching, Germany** The purpose of the ESO is to build, equip and operate astronomical observatories in Chile, and to promote and coordinate European cooperation in astronomical research. Thanks to Switzerland's ESO membership, Swiss astronomy researchers can access the entire infrastructure managed by the observatory.
1983	**The first Federal Research Act (ResA) is passed** ResA was based on the research article in the Federal Constitution that was passed by popular vote in 1973 (Art. 27 ^{sexies} of the then Federal Constitution). It tasked the Federal Council with promoting scientific research and supporting analysis of its findings, monitoring and managing cooperation between research bodies and periodically defining overarching research goals.
1983	**Research by the Federal Administration gains legal basis** With the adoption of the first national Research Act in 1983, the research of the Federal Administration (federal policy research) obtained a legal basis for the first time. The Federal Administration initiates and supports scientific research whose findings it requires to fulfil its tasks. In 1997, as part of the reorganisation of education, research and technology activities, a steering committee for the coordination of federal policy research was set up at the federal level. The total revision of the Federal Act on the Promotion of Research and Innovation in 2012 provided this committee with a legal basis as an interdepartmental coordination committee. The information system ARAMIS was also introduced in 1997, following several parliamentary initiatives demanding greater transparency and closer cooperation in federal research activities. ARAMIS contains information about all research projects and evaluations that the Confederation finances or conducts itself.
1985	**Switzerland joins EUREKA in Brussels** EUREKA is a multilateral organisation with 17 member states. Switzerland is one of the founding members. EUREKA facilitates market-oriented transnational research and innovation projects that are developed and carried out according to the bottom-up approach.
1988	**Switzerland joins the European Synchrotron Radiation Facility (ESRF) in Grenoble, France** The ESRF allows scientists access to X-rays of very high energy, intensity and precision. Swiss researchers from many different institutes and research centres use ESRF beamlines for their investigations and experiments, particularly in the fields of solid state physics, molecular biology, materials science, medical diagnosis and therapy.
1988	**Switzerland joins the Institute Laue-Langevin (ILL) in Grenoble, France** The ILL in Grenoble provides a potent neutron source for scientists, including from Switzerland, who can conduct experiments and studies into neutron scattering, material sciences, solid state physics, chemistry, crystallography, molecular biology and nuclear physics at the facility.

1990	**The Swiss Science Agency (SSA) is founded** The SSA was founded in order to create a special position for the ETH Domain at the Federal Department of Home Affairs (FDHA), along with the Federal Office for Education and Science. From 1992, the SSA assumed central functions in the development of consistent science, research and university policy. Since 1991, the head of the SSA has held the title of State Secretary. He or she coordinates activities within the FDHA and between departments. Key tasks include fostering good relationships with foreign partners and developing international relations within the EU. In 2005, the SSA merged with the Federal Office for Education and Science, forming the State Secretariat for Education and Research.
1991	**Switzerland joins the Human Frontier Science Program Organization (HFSPO) in Strasbourg, France** The purpose of the HFSPO is to promote basic research into neurobiology and molecular biology. The HFSPO therefore supports interdisciplinary research projects, awards research grants and scholarships, and supports young researchers in forming their own research groups.
1991	**The ETH Act is passed** As the EPFL had become a federal institute of technology in 1969, and several research institutes (the Paul Scherrer Institute (PSI), the Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research (WSL), the Swiss Federal Laboratories for Materials Science and Technology (Empa) and the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology (Eawag)) had grown up over time, the federal act relating to federal institutes of technology – from 1854 – was no longer sufficient. In 1969, a draft for an ETH Act that would have taken the developments of the preceding 100 years into account had been rejected in a popular referendum, and so the 1854 federal act remained in effect until a new ETH Act was finally passed in 1991.
1991	**The Research Priority Programmes are launched** Wishing to develop and strengthen research in the environmental, human and technological fields, the federal government gave the Swiss National Science Foundation the lead in four Priority Programmes (‘environment’, ‘biotechnology’, ‘the future of Switzerland’ and ‘information and communication structures’), and the ETH Board was given responsibility for a further four (‘power electronics and system and information technology’, ‘micro and nanosystem technology’, ‘materials research’ and ‘optics’). The Priority Programmes were reconceptualised in the year 2000 with the creation of the National Centres of Competence in Research (NCCRs).
1992	**Switzerland participates officially in the European Union’s Research and Innovation Framework Programmes (FPs)** Switzerland officially joined the FPs as a third-country member in 1992. Researchers from Swiss universities and the private sector had been participating in the FPs on a project-by-project basis since 1987. The European Union’s multi-year framework programmes for research, technological development and demonstration have been the EU’s main tool for the promotion of research and development as well as innovation since 1984.
1995	**SwissCore is founded** SwissCore is the Swiss information and liaison office in Brussels for all matters pertaining to European education, research and innovation. It is co-funded by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI), the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), and the Swiss Innovation Agency, Innosuisse. It serves as a sort of ‘antenna’ in Brussels for Switzerland’s research and higher education community, actively monitoring developments in EU research, education and innovation policy. SwissCore works closely with Euresearch, the Swiss information network for European research.

1995	**The Universities of Applied Sciences Act (UASA) is passed** The Confederation and the cantons recognised a need for action in the tertiary sector in order to improve the framework conditions for Switzerland as a business location and in response to recent European developments in the tertiary education sector. The introduction of the upper-secondary level Federal Vocational Baccalaureate (1994) and the establishment of universities of applied sciences (1995) aimed at strengthening vocational education and training, and offered an alternative to the traditional academic baccalaureate and cantonal universities.
1995	**Regulation on Baccalaureate Recognition comes into force** Following a seventh regulatory reform, which was based on the EDK's core curriculum for baccalaureate schools of 1994, the Regulation on Baccalaureate Recognition (German: MAR) was introduced in 1995. This did away with the former baccalaureate types (see 1906) and introduced a certain degree of choice over the focus given to certain subjects. The Swiss Baccalaureate Commission was also created, replacing the Federal Baccalaureate Commission, and this was made subordinate to both the Federal Department of Home Affairs and the EDK. In 2007 the regulation underwent another revision.
1996	**The KWF changes its name to the Commission for Technology and Innovation (CTI)** Innovation promotion is primarily a tool for strengthening the economy. In 1996, the KWF changed its name to the Commission for Technology and Innovation (CTI) in order to reflect its new mission as a supporter of innovation processes in the Swiss private sector. In 2018, the CTI became the Swiss Innovation Agency (Innosuisse).
1998	**The Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology (OPET) is established** OPET – the successor to the Federal Office for Industry and Labour – was responsible for innovation promotion, vocational education and training, and the universities of applied sciences. The CTI Secretariat (now Innosuisse Secretariat) was part of OPET until the end of 2010.
1999	**The University Funding Act (UFundA) is passed** The University Funding Act signalled a new chapter in the cooperation between the Confederation and the cantons within the university domain. With education and science becoming increasingly internationalised and globalised, joining forces became necessary in order to strengthen Switzerland's competitiveness and achieve a more binding cooperation between the Confederation and the cantons. Furthermore, the UFundA led to the establishment of a body for accreditation and quality assurance (today's Swiss Agency of Accreditation and Quality Assurance, AAQ.
1999	**The Bologna Declaration is signed** When the Swiss University Conference was given the authority to issue framework ordinances on university education, i.e. on the mutual recognition of qualifications, Switzerland essentially created the conditions for the coordinated and successful application of the Bologna Declaration. This was the most significant reform in tertiary education of recent years. 'Bologna' introduced the three-level qualification system of bachelor, master and doctorate (PhD) degrees, the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), transboundary cooperation in quality assurance and national qualifications frameworks. The first bachelor degrees were awarded by the cantonal universities and federal institutes of technology in 2004, and by universities of applied sciences in 2008. All students who began their studies in or after the winter semester 2009/10 study according to the Bologna model.

2000	**The ETH Domain is given a performance mandate and a budget by the Federal Council** With the revision of the ETH Act, the ETH Domain became part of the Federal Department of Home Affairs (today, it is part of the EAER). The ETH Board became the ETH Domain's strategic management body.
2000	**National Centres of Competence in Research (NCCRs) are introduced** The Research Priority Programmes, which were first introduced in 1991, were replaced in 2000 by the National Centres of Competence in Research (NCCRs) – a federal promotional instrument that is managed by the Swiss National Science Fund (SNSF). The federally supported competence centres and their networks ensure the sustainable promotion of Swiss research in strategic areas. This also leads to a concentration of forces and a division of labour between research institutions. Supporting young scientists and promoting cooperation with the private sector are other important benefits.
2000	**The SSC becomes the Swiss Science and Technology Council (SSTC)** The change of name of the Swiss Science Council, which had been established in 1965, reflected the growing importance of technology.
2000	**The first swissnex is opened in Boston, USA** swissnex is an important tool for realising federal policy on bilateral cooperation in ERI between Switzerland and its partner countries, promoting scientific and technological exchange. The first swissnex was established in Boston, followed by further ones in San Francisco (2003), Singapore (2004-2015), Shanghai (2008), Bangalore (2010) and Rio de Janeiro (2013). The science and technology councillors together with the five swissnex locations form the 'swissnex Network – Switzerland's global network for education, research and innovation'.
2001	**The universities of teacher education (UTEs) are founded** The Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK) initiated tertiarisation of teacher education in the 1990s parallel to the development of the universities of applied sciences, resulting in the establishment of universities of teacher education. Previously, teacher training had been run at secondary II level. The newly opened UTEs began offering teaching degrees in 2001.
2002	**The Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act is totally revised** For the first time, all qualifications for occupations not requiring a university degree were regulated by the same act. This included occupations in health, social work and the arts that were previously under cantonal authority. The totally revised Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act established new educational pathways, incorporated vocational education and training into the education system as a whole and also increased permeability within the system. Furthermore, it introduced performance-oriented financing.
2004	**Switzerland becomes gains association to the European Union's Research and Innovation Framework Programmes (FPs)** Switzerland became gained association to the FPs when it signed the bilateral agreements with the EU. Swiss researchers could now head teams and received access to all findings, and Switzerland had a say in the structuring of annual work programmes. Projects by researchers in Switzerland were now funded directly by the European Commission and not, as previously, by the Swiss government.

2004	**Upper-secondary specialised schools and the specialised baccalaureate are introduced** Upper-secondary specialised schools provide upper secondary schooling recognised by the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK). There are two levels to the course they offer: after three years, students can obtain a diploma giving them direct access to courses at a college of higher education, principally in the fields of health, social work and tourism. Or after a fourth year they can obtain a specialised baccalaureate, allowing them to go on to study at a university of applied sciences or university of teacher education.
2005	**The State Secretariat for Education and Research (SER) is founded** The Swiss Science Agency and the Federal Office for Education and Science merged to form the State Secretariat for Education and Research. This renamed and restructured entity was responsible for federal university and research policy (excluding universities of applied sciences and applied research). The SER was part of the Federal Department of Home Affairs (FDHA).
2006	**The four Academies merge to form the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences (a+)** The Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences (a+) is a strategic umbrella organisation comprised of four distinct academies: the Swiss Academy of Natural Sciences (SCNAT), the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences (SAMS), the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences (SAHS) and the Swiss Academy of Engineering Sciences (SATW). The Academies promote networking among scientists at a regional, national and international level across institutions and disciplines. They provide broad-based support to the scientific community and set high standards of scientific excellence. Further aims include detecting trends in society at an early stage and promoting ethics and dialogue between science and society in the interests of greater mutual understanding. The Fondation Science et Cité and the Foundation for Technology Assessment (TA-SWISS) have been appointed centres for excellence for the Swiss Academies.
2006	**New provisions on education introduced into the Constitution** The proposed revision of the provisions on education contained in the Federal Constitution (Art. 61a ff.) was clearly accepted by popular vote. Responsibilities in the education sector remained untouched by the revision – the cantons retained sole authority over their schools, and the Confederation and cantons managed post-compulsory higher learning together. The following are the key changes that were introduced with this revision: • An explicit obligation to coordinate and cooperate in the field of education; • Shared responsibility between the Confederation and the cantons for coordinating and ensuring quality assurance in higher education; • Uniform regulations that harmonised study levels and transfer requirements, academic continuing education, the recognition of institutions and funding principles for universities.

2007	**Switzerland participates in the international experimental reactor ITER, Cadarache (France), and in the agency Fusion for Energy, Barcelona** It is hoped that the construction of the international experimental reactor ITER in France will be the final step towards energy production from fusion energy. The European contribution to ITER is provided by the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom). Switzerland's participation in the scientifically and technologically ambitious ITER project was agreed between the Swiss government and Euratom at the beginning of December 2007. This also gives Switzerland membership of Fusion for Energy, the European joint undertaking responsible for providing Europe's contribution to the ITER project.
2008	**Bilateral cooperation in research and innovation is increased** For a long time, Switzerland's international science policy focused almost exclusively on cooperation with countries in Europe and North America. In 2008, the Confederation decided to expand the scope of its policy to include other countries that possess significant potential for scientific and technological development. Bilateral programmes and pilot activities are now conducted using the 'Leading House' model, whereby Swiss higher education institutions are placed in charge of implementing the various programmes. The aim is to facilitate cooperation with strategically important countries and to boost Switzerland's visibility abroad as a leading country in the ERI field.
2008	**Swiss archaeology abroad** The Confederation funds Swiss archaeological research abroad. Direct funding is provided to the Foundation Swiss School of Archaeology in Greece (ESAG), the Swiss-Liechtenstein Foundation for Archaeological Research Abroad, the Hardt Foundation for Classical Studies and the Swiss Archaeological Mission in Kerma (Sudan). Each of these foundations contributes to the promotion of excellence in Swiss research in the field of archaeology.
2009	**Switzerland joins the European X-Ray Free-Electron Laser Facility (European XFEL) in Hamburg** Commissioned in 2017, this facility is able to bring electrons to very high energies and speeds, thereby causing them to emit short and intense X-ray flashes. It opens up unique research opportunities worldwide, making it possible to record the anatomical details of viruses, determine the molecular composition of cells or film physical-chemical and biological reactions. Switzerland's membership in the European XFEL complements investments already made in several other similar facilities on a national level (Swiss Light Source and SwissFEL at the Paul Scherrer Institute) and international level (European Synchrotron Radiation Facility, ESRF in Grenoble/F).
2010	**The first Swiss Education Report is published** The Federal Constitution requires the Confederation and cantons to work together to ensure the quality and permeability of the education system in Switzerland. Educational monitoring is one of the instruments employed to meet this requirement, and is the responsibility of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research EAER and of the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education EDK. This has resulted in the Swiss Education Report, which first appeared in 2010 and is published every four years. The report contains research and statistical data and figures produced by the Federal Administration about the entire Swiss education system, from pre-school to continuing education.

2011	**The Higher Education Act (HEdA) is passed** The new constitutional article on education (2006) charged the Confederation and the cantons with coordinating and ensuring quality assurance in tertiary education. To satisfy this requirement, the federal government and the cantons needed to sign agreements and defer certain tasks to joint bodies such as the Swiss University Conference. In addition to the HEdA, agreements on cooperation in education were signed by the cantons, along with the Federal-Cantonal Agreement on Cooperation in Higher Education (FCA-CHE). The FCA-CHE clarifies the joint bodies' responsibilities and defines coordination principles for tertiary education in Switzerland. It further defines the Confederation's constitutional obligation to financially support the cantonal universities and universities of applied sciences. The HEdA came fully into force in 2017, replacing the University Funding Act (1999) and the Universities of Applied Sciences Act (1995).
2012	**The Research and Innovation Promotion Act (RIPA) is passed** After several partial revisions, the total revision of RIPA produced a clearer, more easily readable piece of legislation. RIPA remained true to existing legislation, but clarified tasks and responsibilities in certain areas (e.g. international cooperation), simplified and optimised planning procedures, harmonised research promotion with the new Higher Education Act (HEdA) and formed a basis for the development of a national innovation park.
2013	**The State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) is founded** The State Secretariat for Education and Research (SER), which was a part of the Federal Department of Home Affairs (FDHA), and the Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology, which was part of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs (FDEA) merged and moved to the reorganised Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER, formerly the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, FDEA). With this change, education, research and innovation were now under one federal roof for the first time.
2014	**Switzerland's partial association to the EU Framework Programmes** The adoption of the mass immigration initiative in Switzerland and Switzerland's failure to sign the Croatia Protocol blocked the ongoing negotiations on Swiss participation in the 8th European Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (Horizon 2020). A compromise was found and the parties signed a partial association agreement valid until the end of 2016. Since 1 January 2017, Switzerland has again enjoyed full association to the Horizon 2020 package.
2014	**The SSTC becomes the Swiss Science and Innovation Council (SSIC)** Following the revision of the Research and Innovation Promotion Act (RIPA, see 2012), the Swiss Science and Technology Council became the SSIC. The SSIC is the only independent advisory body appointed by the Federal Council within the ERI system. It provides – on its own initiative – the Federal Council and the EAER with documentation for the long-term development of research and innovation, and also performs an advisory role.

2014	**Federal Act on Continuing Education and Training is passed** Parliament passes the Federal Act on Continuing Education and Training, which comes into force in 2017. This Act regulates the place of continuing education and training (CET) in the Swiss education system and establishes principles for responsibilities, quality, recognition of achievements for formal qualifications, improving equal opportunities and competition. These mainly have an effect on the Confederation's and the cantons' special legislation in this field. The Act also sets uniform conditions for CET subsidies in such legislation. In addition, it sets out how the Confederation promotes research and development of CET, and regulates how the Confederation promotes the acquisition and maintenance of basic skills by adults.
2015	**Switzerland joins the European Spallation Source (ESS) in Lund, Sweden** The ESS research facility in Lund, Sweden, aims to become the most potent neutron source in the world. It is scheduled to be available for use by researchers from 2026. The ESS allows structural and dynamic study of materials on molecular and atomic scales. It also serve as an addition to existing facilities and will allow Swiss scientists to conduct experiments that cannot be carried out in Switzerland.
2016	**The Swiss Innovation Park is launched** The Swiss Innovation Park is being realised by its home cantons, the private sector and the universities involved in this project. Under the umbrella of the Swiss Innovation Park Foundation, the park's hubs are located near the ETH Zurich, the EPFL and at the Aargau, Northwestern Switzerland and Biel network locations. The Swiss Innovation Park's aim is to secure Switzerland's position as an innovative country, thereby ensuring the economy's competitiveness. The Confederation does not have any direct involvement in the Swiss Innovation Park, but does support it in a subsidiary manner by guaranteeing loans for research infrastructure and making land available with building rights.
2016	**Act on Cooperation in Education between the Confederation and the cantons (CEdA) is approved** In accordance with the provisions on education in the Federal Constitution adopted in 2006, the Confederation and the cantons jointly contribute to high quality and permeability in the Swiss education system within the scope of their responsibilities. The Federal Constitution requires them to coordinate their efforts and ensure cooperation in joint bodies and other arrangements. Education Monitoring Switzerland with the Education Report, and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), are examples of this cooperation. CEdA specifies that cooperation in education between the Confederation and cantons should be based on a cooperation agreement. The Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research and the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education formulate joint goals every four years for the coordinated and progressive development of the Swiss education system.
2016	**The first Swiss Report on Research and Innovation is published** This report published by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation SERI, examined the performance of Swiss research and innovation for the first time. It provides monitoring for political stakeholders, giving comparisons of international performance and identifying systemic connections between systems. A new report is published every four years, whereby international performance comparisons are updated every two years.

2017	**The strategy on exchanges and mobility is approved** The Confederation and cantons approve the strategy on exchanges and mobility, acknowledging that these form a self-evident part of a person's educational and working career. The aim is to increase the number and quality of exchanges and to promote mobility. Movetia, the agency founded by the Confederation and cantons to promote exchange and mobility, is largely responsible at an operational level.
2018	**CTI becomes the Swiss Innovation Agency (Innosuisse)** At the beginning of 2018, the Swiss Innovation Agency (Innosuisse) commenced operations. As the federal government's new funding agency for scientific innovation, Innosuisse has taken over the role played by the former Commission for Technology and Innovation (CTI). Innosuisse is a federal institution under public law with its own legal personality. Its remit is to promote science-based innovation in the interests of business and society.
2018	**SSIC becomes the Swiss Science Council (SSC)** To avoid the risk of confusion with Innosuisse's Innovation Council, the SSIC was renamed SSC. It will remain a completely independent advisory body within the ERI system for the long-term development of research and innovation.

Further information

Federal law: https://www.admin.ch/gov/en/start/federal-law.html

- Official Compilation: chronological compilation of federal legislation and extraordinary publications
- Systematic Compilation: consolidated compilation of federal and international law

Federal Statistical Office: www.bfs.admin.ch

Swiss Historical Dictionary (in German, French and Italian): www.hls-dhs-dss.ch

Disclaimer

This timeline lists the most important milestones in Swiss education, research and innovation from the viewpoint of the Confederation. It is not exhaustive and will be updated periodically.

If you have any comments, corrections or additions to this timeline, please let us know by contacting us at info@sbfi.admin.ch.

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