

AMERICAN COLLEGE PROGRAM



Université de Fribourg - Universität Freiburg

UNITED STATES PASSPORT

It is strongly recommended that your passport be applied for as soon as possible.

How to obtain a passport:

You must apply in person to the County Clerk, United States District Court, United States Post Office or the United States Passport Bureau.

Items required:

Proof of citizenship in the form of an official certificate of birth with seal or naturalization certificate or previous passport. Two duplicate passport photos exactly 2"x 2" on thin, non-glossy, uncoated paper with a light background showing full front view of the applicant, with an image size from bottom of chin to top of head between 1 and 3/8" in sharp focus, dressed in street attire, without a hat or dark glasses and printed on paper with a plain light (or off-white) background.

Safeguarding your passport:

Precautions must be taken to safeguard your passport, as well as your other valuables. Use of a money belt or neck pouch is strongly recommended, especially when travelling, taking a nap on a train, etc.

In the event that your passport is stolen:

Report loss to the police and obtain a police report.

Take the police report to the nearest American consulate or embassy. **You should have your passport number available. Be sure to record it. A photocopy of the first page of your passport should be carried with you when you travel.**

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PRE-DEPARTURE

Prior to departure for Switzerland, all participants receive an information packet concerning formalities of departure. The student should complete all forms as soon as possible and return them to the administrative office of the American College Program. All students must have a valid passport before departure. Passport applications can be made through either the US Passport Agency or through your local post office. It is imperative that the passport be valid for the duration of the program. Passport applications should be made no later than two months prior to the departure date.

VISA

Regardless of program, all students must complete an official health report with a physician. This information is necessary for residency status in Switzerland and in case of emergencies. Non-US citizens may also participate in the program, though, depending on the particular nationality, a special residency application for Switzerland may be required. Please indicate your nationality at the time of application for admission to the program; the ACP will inquire about any specific directives from the Swiss Federal Police for Foreigners. Dual national citizens, if one of their nationalities is Swiss, should notify the direction of their Swiss citizenship.

ACP:

Students participating in the Academic Year or Semester Program are obliged to apply for a student visa themselves. In previous years, ACP students were exempt from applying for a visa (due to agreements that date back several decades); however, due to the Schengen agreement (signed with the EU) it is now mandatory for students to apply for a visa before departing for Switzerland. Entering Switzerland is not the problem but rather US airlines have started requiring people with a return ticket that exceeds 90 days to show proof of extra-Schengen area travel or a visa for the longer stay.

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In order for you to apply for a student visa, please refer to the links below:

[Visa Application Requirements](#) [PDF]

[Additional information on costs and processing times](#)

[Where to apply: Swiss visa desks in the USA](#)

SIO:

Students participating in the Survey of International Organizations (winter or summer) do not have to apply for student visas. The American College Program office in Fribourg will take care of all visa formalities and Swiss residence permits for each student. There is no need for participants to apply for Swiss visas themselves.

Departure for Switzerland:

Generally, a student flies from the closest international airport directly to Zürich or Geneva. Normally, students should plan on getting a return ticket for the end of the program as this gives them some time after the end of the university session to tie up loose ends. All costs for the tickets are the responsibility of the individual students. However, sometimes parents or the student have frequent flyer miles which they use. What is imperative is that students arrive on the specified date of arrival.

LUGGAGE

Only the airline can indicate precise baggage allowances. However, it is the experience of the American College Program that students tend to overpack. Students who follow the [suggested packing list](#) included in the pre-departure information packet generally have no trouble. Alumni of the program recommend creativity in packing (see appendix for packing list). They also suggest future students to purchase a few items upon arrival in Switzerland, such as electrical appliances with provision for 220 voltage.

Many students bring along ski equipment or other sports gear. Students who plan to ski regularly are encouraged to use their own skis, boots, and poles. Ski rental in Switzerland can

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be very expensive (\$20 per day, average rental.) Depending on the airline, skis may be considered part of the baggage allowance or a small additional fee will be charged. Please check directly with the airline prior to departure.

ARRIVAL IN SWITZERLAND

Upon arrival in Fribourg students will be transferred to their permanent housing. The following two weeks will consist of six hours of intensive language courses per day and various orientation meetings. The orientation meetings will include details on registration, class offerings, leisure activities, etc. There is usually a hike in the mountains and city visits, including a group visit to Bern, the capital. The Language Practicum continues until the beginning of the semester. This will provide students with opportunities to explore, adjust, and get to know one another. In and out of class, students will participate in group-discussions about culture and adjustment to the experience of study abroad.