

# Obtaining the Swiss Passport

## Your Roadmap

### 1 MEET THE REQUIREMENTS

Before you can start the naturalization process, you typically need 10 years of residence in Switzerland and a C-permit.

### 2 APPLY FOR CITIZENSHIP

To start the process, complete the "Application for Naturalization" form.

### 3 APPLICATION REVIEW LOCAL

The canton and municipality will review your application and ask you to submit various documents.

### 4 COMPLETE A COURSE ABOUT SWITZERLAND

You will be invited to attend a course in which you learn basic knowledge about the geography, history, politics and society of Switzerland.

### 5 ATTEND INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHORITIES

You will receive an invitation for an interview before a commission of your municipality. They will assess your integration with questions on various topics.

### 6 APPLICATION REVIEW FEDERAL

The federal government examines your application and forwards the required "federal permit" to your canton. At the end of this step you receive your passport.

The naturalization process takes about 2 years and is at the end of your integration process. An important prerequisite for success is proof that you can communicate verbally and in writing in a national language.

This roadmap will help you understand the naturalization process and determine what else you need.

## HOW DIFFICULT WILL THIS PROCESS BE?

Many are afraid to begin this process. They fear their knowledge of Switzerland - especially politics - is insufficient and too difficult to master.

Right now, it may look like it's a very long road to reach the required level of language proficiency, never mind gaining the confidence to speak in front of a panel in a foreign language.

Maybe you don't know where to begin. Preparing in a traditional school will take too long and your schedule is already full. Maybe you're hesitant to even begin the process.

Don't fear: almost everyone who starts the process ends up achieving their goal. We will help you learn the required materials and have a successful application.

### Language requirements:

Naturalization requires that you can communicate in everyday life in spoken and written form in one of the national languages. For this, your language skills have to be at least at reference level **B1 speaking and understanding** and **A2 in writing**.

At level B1, this is what you need to be able to do in this context:

- understand the main points on topics regarding society, history, geography, and politics in Switzerland
- produce simple connected statements on these topics
- describe e. g. the different levels of government, specifics of your community, your rights and duties as a Swiss citizen
- briefly give reasons and explanations for your opinions

Certificates from Goethe, Telc or Fide are recognized.

### You only need the settlement permit C?

In most cases, only proof of your language competence is required. You must prove your language competence for this permit with a certificate at least at level **A2 speaking and understanding** / **A1 writing**.

If you only need the C-permit, you can scroll to the end of the document.

*The following points are the primary steps of the naturalization process for ordinary naturalization.*

*Note: they may differ in detail in the individual cantons and municipalities.*

# MEET THE REQUIREMENTS

Requirements before you can start the naturalization process

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- 10 years of residence in Switzerland
- C-permit
- Proof of respect for public safety and order (no criminal record, no debt collection/loss certificates, your taxes are paid)
- Participation in economic or life or acquiring education (have a job or be studying, no social assistance in the three years before submitting the application, unless you have paid it back in full)
- Respect for the values of the Federal Constitution; that means you respect and agree with
  - the principles of the rule of law as well as the free democratic principles
  - the fundamental rights such as the equality of men and women, the right to life and personal freedom, freedom of belief and conscience, and freedom of expression; freedom of opinion

This part is tested in the interview and by signing a document (self-declaration) that contains the values of the constitution.

# APPLY FOR CITIZENSHIP

To start the process, complete the "Application for Naturalization" form.

You can find examples here:

For Zurich: <https://www.zh.ch/de/migration-integration/einbuengerung/ordentliche-einbuengerung.html#-792208150>

For Basel: <https://www.bdm.bs.ch/Einbuengerung/ordentliche-einbuengerung.html>

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*The following points are the primary steps of the naturalization process for ordinary naturalization.*

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# APPLICATION REVIEW - LOCAL

The canton and municipality will review your application and ask you to submit various documents.

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- a) Copy of passport
- b) Tax identification card
- c) Names of references, normally 4 people. The reference persons must be Swiss citizens and have their place of residence in Switzerland
- d) Proof of language skills or language certificate (s. textbox "language requirements")
- e) Extract from the debt enforcement and loss certificate register
- f) Extract from the criminal record

Note: This may vary by canton.

These documents may also be required:

Information from the social welfare authorities on any financial benefits received; (if any)

Certificate of residence

Note: Some documents, for example the civil status certificates and the tax certificate, must not be older than three months.

***A first interview often takes place in this step.***

**The interview is conducted by telephone or in person and lasts about 20 – 30 minutes.**

***This interview will be conducted in German. You need to be able to understand and answer questions about your current situation in Switzerland, your family members, your profession and other questions. The questions asked here are intended to clarify whether you meet the formal requirements for naturalization.***

**The canton forwards your application to your municipality. Then the municipality invites you for an interview (s. point 5)**

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***Note: they may differ in detail in the individual cantons and municipalities.***

# COMPLETE A COURSE ABOUT SWITZERLAND

Learn more and be seen.



You will be invited to attend a course in which you learn basic knowledge about geography, history, politics and society of Switzerland. Your knowledge of these topics will be tested either at the end of the course or later in the interview. How this is handled depends on the canton where you live.

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*Note: they may differ in detail in the individual cantons and municipalities.*

# ATTEND INTERVIEW

Interview before a commission of your municipality.

Once you make it this far, you have met the formal requirements for naturalization. The municipality will test your successful integration with questions on various topics. Among other things, you must be able to talk about the following topics (s. also textbox "language requirements"):

- The political structure of Switzerland and the most important political bodies
- The different levels of government
- The responsibilities of public authorities
- Political systems and the course of important political processes
- Swiss geography
- The specifics of your community
- Key events and people in Swiss history
- Your rights and duties as a citizen of Switzerland

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***This interview is conducted in German.*** It is conducted in person and lasts about 30 - 60 minutes.

In addition to your knowledge of the country, this interview examines how well you are integrated in your community. Participation in politics, education, sports, culture, volunteerism, or local/regional events will be discussed.

After this interview the active part of your naturalization is finished. The municipal commission writes a report and sends it to the canton and the federal government for further review.

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*Note: they may differ in detail in the individual cantons and municipalities.*

# APPLICATION REVIEW - FEDERAL

Your application is reviewed by the federal authorities.



After the federal government examines and approves your application, the "federal permit" to your canton. This examination takes about 3 -4 months.

At the end of this process you will receive a "Bürgerbrief" from your municipality and you can apply for your Swiss passport.

**YOU DON'T HAVE TO MANAGE THIS PROCESS ALONE.**

**Pass your C-Permit or Naturalization German Test  
in 90% Less Time than through Traditional Language Classes.**

Most language classes try to teach you everything about the German language – not the fraction of it you need to pass your C-permit or naturalization test.

Our 1-on-1 coaching focuses on the specific skills you need for the tests  
AND fits your schedule.

To start, we'll assess exactly what you still need to learn (otherwise we'd have to cover a bunch of things you already know — just like a normal language school). After the assessment call, you'll retrieve a written report of what you need to learn. After that, we will have two more 45 minute calls to focus exclusively on those topics in more detail.

[Click here to learn more about the assessment and schedule your calls](#)

# COMMON BELIEFS ABOUT NATURALIZATION PROCESS AND WHY PEOPLE FAIL

**I will never be able to learn German well enough. I will fail the language tests and not be able to get my C-permit nevermind my Swiss passport.**

- Thinking that you must know the language perfectly and communicate without errors is incorrect. Typically, language schools teach you about the language and its structure, but not how to use it in specific situations – in this case the topics you need to know for naturalization.

**I need to be able to speak German before I start the process.**

- You can learn the language as you begin the naturalization process. Proof of your language proficiency does not have to be provided at the very beginning of your naturalization. Having some basic communication skills and showing that you are improving your language skills is sufficient in most cases.

**This process is too overwhelming. I can't take on a project of this size right now.**

- It's true that some paperwork has to be done at the beginning (s. roadmap point 3). However, there is a lot of time between the each of the steps, which you can use to learn about the required topics and the language you need.

**I can't even order anything in a restaurant. How can I learn what is required and discuss it in front of the committee in a foreign language?**

- Effective learning that focuses on skills and topics relevant to your naturalization will prepare you for the interview. After learning what you need for naturalization, you may still not be able to order perfectly in a restaurant, but you can discuss the Swiss Constitution with a waiter, and who else can do that at your table?

**Speaking German in front of a panel makes me very nervous, sometimes I even panic at the thought.**

- That's understandable - and quite normal. Speaking in front of strangers makes most of us nervous – even in our native language! Similar to a job interview, you can prepare for the interview questions that are likely to be asked, and then appear confident in front of the panel.

**What if they say in the final interview that my German is not good enough?**

- In the final interview, the committee may decide that your German is insufficient and refuse to continue the procedure. This may be the case even if you have proven your level by a certificate. However, if you focus your preparation on the language you need for the interview, this is very unlikely.