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THERE are seven universities in Switzerland - Basle, Berne, Lausanne, Geneva, Zurich, Neuchâtel and Fribourg. In addition, higher education is provided at the Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology in Zurich and Lausanne (the only institutions run by the Confederation), and at the Swiss School of Economics and Public Administration at St. Gall.

The Universities are autonomous and thus vary. Those in the German speaking zones grant doctorate degrees. The universities in the French speaking areas award licentiates and doctor degrees.

There are also State examinations which confer on successful candidates the right to practice a profession, such as teaching, medicine, law. These awards are usually reserved for Swiss nationals.

Length of study at a university varies between seven and eight semesters (13 semesters for medicine). Diplomas are awarded after four years of study. Only a proportion of students proceed to the doctor's degree. In principle university courses

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are designed to prepare students for research work.

In Switzerland very little specifically professional training is provided at the undergraduate level, except in medicine and for the purposes of secondary school teaching. Yet in practice a great many students, after leaving the university, take up occupations in commerce and industry.

In theory a student must be accepted by a professor for research. In practice, of course entrance depends upon the student having fulfilled the necessary entrance requirements in the form of accepted examinations. Each university has its own set of regulations and intending students should apply direct to the Registrar of the university concerned for details.

About a quarter of the students in Swiss Institutes of higher learning are from abroad. Medicine and the humanities attract most of these. Some 500



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Swiss universities require Swiss students to hold the maturity certificate – also known as the baccalaureate – which is awarded to students who are at least 18 years old. This examination completes the academic high school (gymnasium) course.

Foreign students must hold a certificate of education accepted by the authorities as equivalent to the Swiss maturity certificate to be admitted to a full university course. One example is the General Certificate of Education 'A' level.

Foreign students wishing to enrol as candidates for a doctor's degree need not necessarily have a first degree from one of their own universities. Neither is such a degree always accepted as a suitable qualification.

Acceptance often depends on a student's successful work during one semester (half year).

There are also orientation courses for foreign students.

The examinations of foreign students are conducted by committees designated by the faculty concerned. A thesis, or shorter paper, and examinations in subsidiary subjects are required.

There is less distinction than in England between undergraduates and graduate studies in Swiss universities.

Of the seven universities, three are located in the German-speaking part of the country, where the lectures are in German. Three are located in the French-speaking part of the country, where the lectures are given in French. The Catholic University of Fribourg is bilingual, French and German being the languages of instruction.

Other establishments of higher learning include two technical schools of university level – the Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology.

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