

The Philippine-Swiss Agreement on the Exchange of Professional and Technical Trainees

This is an agreement signed in the year 2002 between the Philippines and Switzerland that allows the exchange of trainees between the two countries, at 50 trainees per year per country.

Under this program, training candidates must meet the educational requirements of their respective professions or field of work, and must be between 18 and 35 years of age. Trainees will be engaged in regular work in the institution /company that hire them for a period of not more than 18 months, and will be duly compensated and receive benefits in accordance with the labor laws of host country.

So far since 2002, only around 20 trainees have been deployed from the Philippines to Switzerland, mostly from technical fields, and there had been only one (1) trainee from Switzerland to the Philippines.

In the past 2 to 3 years, efforts have been made by both countries to maximize the full potential of this Agreement. In December 2010, the Philippine-Swiss Joint Working Group (JWG) was formed in Berne, to look into ways to actively promote the two-way exchange of trainees, from various professions, including nursing and healthcare. The JWG continues to meet to date in order to enhance the management of the trainee program.

For a Filipino who wishes to become a trainee in Switzerland, he/she must find an employer. Employers may require trainees to be proficient in the official language of the canton where their institution/company is located (German, French, or Italian).

The standard training contract, training application forms and related training guidelines are available at the Swiss Federal Office of Migration (FOM)'s webpage: <http://www.bfm.admin.ch/content/bfm/en/home/themen/arbeit/stagiaireprogramme.html>

A Filipino trainee's training contract, duly signed by the employer, has to be submitted for review/approval at the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), which will then issue the exit clearance for the trainee's departure. The Swiss Embassy in Manila will issue the visa to trainees after their documents have been approved/ endorsed by the FOM.