Bern, January 2019

International (non-EU) students at the University of Bern who need visa

Here we have listed information and suggestions on entry requirements and visa applications for incoming non-EU students at the University of Bern:

**Rental agreements**

1. Where possible, enclose a rental agreement with your visa application.

2. It is important that you live in the city, or at least in the canton, of Bern. If you choose to live in another canton, you may not be eligible for a student visa to study at the University of Bern. (Other types of visa may be subject to different rules.)

3. The rental period should be at least 3 months (preferably 1 or 2 semesters).

4. To determine the number of rooms a couple or family requires, the migration authorities will calculate the number of persons in a family, less 1. Therefore, a family of four needs an apartment with at least 3 rooms, while couples need at least a 1.5 to 2 room apartment.

Please note: If you choose to live in a student hall of residence, we recommend you register early as demand often exceeds supply. You should enclose the rental contract to your visa application.

**Financial statement**

1. Visa applications must be accompanied by proof of independent means amounting to at least CHF 18,000. This money must be deposited at a bank approved by FINMA.

2. The account holder must be either the person applying for the entry visa or a guarantor living in Switzerland, i.e. proof of financial independence can also be provided via the guarantee of a Swiss citizen or a person living in Switzerland with a B or C residence permit (Declaration of Sponsorship).

Please note: Each year in which a student is resident in the canton of Bern, the immigration authorities will ask to see a financial statement that proves the applicant has a balance of CHF 18,000. A sideline activity, such as part-time employment, that results in income must not be included in the financial statement, as the authorities are only interested in seeing that the student has this minimum balance.
Other

1. Visa applications are best submitted early. Immigration officials need at least 8 to 12 weeks to process applications. If more documents are subsequently required, it may take even longer.

2. Passport validity: A valid passport is a prerequisite for both visa and residency permit in Switzerland. Normally, students receive a residency permit for 12 months, which can be renewed annually. The passport must therefore be valid for at least 12+6 months (18 months in total) upon entry into Switzerland.

3. Depending on your place of residence, all letters and information from government organisations are in German or French, the official languages in the Canton of Bern.

Possible reasons for the refusal of a visa application:
The migration authorities have discretionary powers when issuing visas. Laws pertaining to foreign nationals are only provided in German. Some common reasons for refusal are, if:
- The applicant is already over 30 years of age
- The applicant already has a Master's degree
- There are reasonable grounds for suspicion that the applicant will not leave Switzerland after his/her studies ("unconfirmed departure").
- The applicant does not speak German

Please note: If you are enrolled in Master’s program taught in English, we recommend you provide proof of this when applying for a visa.

Disclaimer:
Despite successful matriculation at the University of Bern, it is possible that immigration officials will reject a visa application. Unfortunately, the University of Bern does not provide any legal advice and can neither speed up nor influence the decision of the authorities.