Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Home Affairs FDHA
Swiss Federal Statistical Office FSO

Factsheet – Statistical activity and published results

Staff of higher education institutions (SHIS-PERS)

Description

The Swiss Higher Education Information System's staff database (SHIS-PERS) was created to meet a growing need for coordination and planning by the Confederation and the cantons in the university sector. The staff statistics for the three types of higher education institution (universities incl. federal institutes of technology UIT, universities of applied sciences UAS, universities of teacher education UTE) are derived from three separate surveys. They are published annually and provide information on the human resources available in the Swiss tertiary education sector.
With the help of a series of differentiation criteria, comparisons of the use of resources can be made between the respective institutions, between fields of study, staff categories and between different types of activities. Furthermore, the socio-demographic characteristics of staff serve as a foundation for addressing key policy issues in higher education, including gender equality.
The collected data provides an essential foundation for calculating indicators used in national and international comparative studies. It is also used as a basis for determining reference costs for university funding allocation.
The statistical surveys were partially revised and harmonised in 2013. New SHIS staff categories were introduced that apply to all types of higher education institutions. In addition, the full-time equivalents for all types of higher education institutions are now based on the calendar year, while the number of staff relate to a reference date (31.12).

Available since:
UIT: 1980
UAS: 2000
UTE: 2005

Methodology

Type of survey

Exhaustive survey

Variables

Higher education staff are all persons who were employed at a Swiss university during a calendar year (reference year).

Identifier: OASI number

Employment criteria:
- SHIS staff categories
- Fields / field of study
- Work-time percentage on 31.12.
- Full-time equivalents

Use of resources:
- Basic university education
- Postgraduate advanced education
- (Applied) research and development
- Continuing education
- Provision of other services

Socio-demographic variables:
- Sex
- Country of origin

- Age

Additional output variables:
SHIS staff categories: professors (UIT), lecturers with management responsibilities (UAS and UTE), other lecturers, assistants and scientific staff, management, administrative and technical staff
International staff categories according to the UNESCO–OECD–Eurostat joint data collection (UOE): teaching staff, academic staff, administrative and technical staff
Indicator: student-to-staff ratio

Reference period
Calendar year for the full-time equivalents; reference date 31.12. for the data on individual persons

Periodicity
Annual

Degree of regionalisation
Higher education institutions: all of Switzerland

Quality of statistical data
While the quality of the administrative data is high, it is always a challenge to accurately determine the amount of work time spent on the separate activities in reality; these data should therefore be understood as approximate values.
Most recent evaluation of quality: 2014, continuous improvement in cooperation with university representatives (coordinating committees for university staff statistics UIT/UAS/UTE)

Policy on revisions

Periodic revisions
The currently published figures for earlier years may differ from previously published figures, as the data is retrospectively corrected if necessary. Each calculation reflects the latest information available.

Methodical / ad hoc revisions
Revisions are undertaken as required (e.g. nomenclature updates).

Last revision
2013
Core elements: Introduction of OASI numbers as identifiers to permit longitudinal studies, adjustment and standardisation of reporting periods, harmonisation of staff categories.

Legal bases

Ordinance of 30 April 2025 on Federal Statistics (SR 431.011)

Organisation

Federal Statistical Office (FSO) in cooperation with the Swiss higher education institutions

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