

Description

Holders of the Federal VET Diploma in Commerce are able to carry out administrative tasks within the private or public sector. Their duties vary depending on the scope of activity of their employer and their job description. They may deal with commercial correspondence (distribution, drafting and sending), accounting (bookkeeping entries and verification of payments), orders (receipt and invoicing), greeting clients and the management of a secretariat.

Their main activities include:

Correspondence and orders

- collecting, sorting and distributing the mail to the various employees; dealing with the various mail to be sent;
- controlling, classifying and filing various documents: letters, files, orders and reports; sometimes, scanning them to electronically transfer or manage them;
- drafting files, reports, minutes and correspondence from notes taken, recordings or elements dictated, sometimes in a foreign language;
- answering mail (requests for information, job applications, calls for tenders, order confirmations, etc.);

Accounting

- entering the invoices after having controlled them, entering the amounts in an account and keeping the books up to date;
- preparing the documents related to the receipt of an order (invoice including the calculation of the VAT and postage fees, delivery slip, customs form, etc.);
- regularly verifying the accounts (amounts paid and collected) using accounting documents and management software;
- sending payment reminders and where applicable, starting debt recovery proceedings for unpaid invoices;

Secretariat

- managing the schedule of work meetings and meeting places;
- updating the various databases (clients, orders, suppliers, etc.);
- greeting clients or the general public, answering the telephone and managing the fax and electronic messaging service
- training apprentices, trainees and supervising office assistants.

Work environment

The activities of holders of the Federal VET Diploma in Commerce vary depending on the size of the company: they may work alone in a small company and manage all the administrative side or be part of a department in a large infrastructure and deal with more challenging tasks. The work is sedentary and they work regular working hours. They mainly work in front of a computer screen and form part of a hierarchical structure.

Vocational education and training (VET)

There are two types of VET programmes leading to issuance of the Federal VET Diploma in Commerce: dual-track VET programmes, which combine apprenticeship training at a host company with classroom instruction at a commercial school; entirely school-based VET programmes, where it is the commercial school that handles both theory and practical training. Two levels of training are available, depending on the aptitudes of learners: Profile B (basic programme) or Profile E (expanded programme).

LocationDual-track VET programme:

- apprenticeship training (3 to 4 days per week) at a host company;
- classroom instruction (1 to 2 days per week) at a commercial school;
- branch courses (8 to 16 days over a period of 3 years) at a branch training centre.

Entirely school-based VET programme:

- both theory and practical training are handled by commercial school.

Duration

- 3 years.

Admission requirements

- completed compulsory education;
- certain host companies or commercial schools may request applicants to take an entrance test.

Diploma obtained

- Federal VET Diploma in Commerce.

Depending on the conditions in each specific canton, learners enrolled in the profile E level of the VET programme may also prepare for the Federal Vocational Baccalaureate examination, either during the VET programme or after completion.

Programme (classroom instruction)

Theoretical subjects (over 3-year period)	Profile B	Profile E
French	360	240
1 st foreign language (German or English)	320	240
2 nd foreign language	-	240
Information, communication, administration	360	200
Business and society	400	520
Depth & expansion of knowledge and independent work	120	120
Interdisciplinary skills	40	40
Physical education	200	200
Total	1,800	1,800

For further information, please visit www.orientation.ch/ecoles.

Qualities required

Holders of the Federal VET Diploma in Commerce are required to have the following qualities:

- An ability to work in a team
- Availability
- An interest in administrative tasks
- An interest in foreign languages
- An interest in information technology
- Organisational skills
- A logical and methodical mind
- A good memory

Career prospects

Holders of the Federal VET Diploma in Commerce may find themselves faced with different situations in their first job depending on the sector chosen (banking, insurance, transport, legal firms, government services, etc.) and their knowledge of foreign languages. After a few years' experience, holders of the Federal VET Diploma in Commerce may specialise in a specific field: insurance, banking, financial advice, marketing, human resources, product management and sales, tourism, etc. and hold senior positions in line with their level of motivation and abilities to manage a team. Part-time work is widespread in this type of work.

Federal VET Diplomas in Commerce issued in French-Speaking cantons of Switzerland in 2011

FR: 319; GE: 300; JU: 88; NE: 157; VD: 891; VS: 310.

Professional development

Holders of the Federal VET Diploma in Commerce may, if they desire, pursue their professional development and obtain the following diplomas:

- Legal secretary diploma, modular training lasting for 1 year, various locations in French-speaking Switzerland;
- Federal PET Diploma for fiduciary agents, financing and accounting specialists, forwarding specialists, property managers, insurance or social security insurance specialists, executive assistants, Public Relations specialists, communications planners, marketing specialists, corporate organisation specialists, Human Resources specialists, etc., a variety of locations and durations;
- Federal PET Diploma for experts in finance and controlling, tax experts, real estate superintendents and brokers, social security experts, heads of marketing, etc., a variety of locations and durations;
- PET college degree in business data processing, business economics, banking economics, insurance economics, full-time or part-time training;
- UAS Bachelor of Science degree in tourism, business economics, business data processing, etc.

For further information, please visit www.orientation.ch/perfectionnement.

Related qualifications

- Travel agent diploma
- Federal VET Certificate in Office Assistance
- Federal VET Diploma in Medical Assistance
- Federal VET Diploma in Retail Trade Management
- Federal VET Diploma in Mediamatics
- Hotel secretary diploma
- Medical secretary diploma

Useful addresses

Swiss Conference of Commercial Training and Examination Branches (SKKAB)
Schwanengasse 9
Case postale 6853
3001 Bern
Tel.: 031 398 26 10
<http://www.csbfc.ch>

Swiss Commercial Employees Association (SEC Suisse)
Secretariat for French-speaking Cantons of Switzerland
Rue Saint-Honoré 3
Case postale 3072
2001 Neuchâtel 1
Tel.: 032 721 21 37
<http://www.secsuisse.ch>