Federal VET (Vocational Education and Training) Diploma in Commerce

**Description**
Holders of the Federal VET Diploma in Commerce are able to carry out administrative tasks within a private company or a government department. 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)**
The VET programme leading to the issuance of the Federal VET Diploma in Commerce may be obtained either through company training or at college. Two tracks are available: profile B (basic programme) or profile E (expanded programme).

**Location**

**In-company training:**
- practical training (3 to 4 days per week) in a company;
- theoretical training (1 to 2 days per week) at the vocational commercial college;
- inter-company training courses (8 to 16 days over a period of 3 years).

**At college:**
- theory and practice in the commercial colleges.

**Duration**
- 3 years.

**Conditions for admission**
- completed mandatory schooling;
- certain companies or colleges may request applicants to sit an entrance examination.

**Diploma obtained**
- Federal VET Diploma in Commerce.

Possibility of obtaining a Federal Vocational Baccalaureate during the apprenticeship (for the profile E) or after the Federal VET Diploma has been awarded depending on the conditions that apply in each specific canton.

**Programme (In-company training)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical subjects (over 3 years)</th>
<th>Profile B</th>
<th>Profile E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st foreign language (German or English)</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd foreign language</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information, communication, administration</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and society</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depth &amp; expansion of knowledge and independent work</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary skills</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,800</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,800</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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For further information, please visit [www.orientation.ch/ecoles](http://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 Switzerland in 2011

Professional development
Holders of the Federal VET Diploma in Commerce may, if they desire, pursue their professional development and obtain the following diplomas:
- legal secretarial diploma, modular training lasting for 1 year, various locations in French-speaking Switzerland;
- federal 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 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;
- diplomas in business data processing, for corporate economists, for banking economists, insurance economists, from colleges of higher education, ES (Graduate schools) full time course or continuing training;
- HES Bachelor of Science in tourism, corporate economics, business data processing, etc.

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

Related professions
- Travel agent
- Certified vocational training as an Office Assistant
- Federal VET Diploma as a Medical Assistant
- Federal VET Diploma as a Retail Trade Manager
- Federal VET Diploma in the field of Mediamatics
- Hotel secretary
- Medical secretary

Useful addresses
Conférence suisse des branches de formation et d’examen commerciales (CSBFC)
[Swiss conference of commercial organisations responsible for training and examinations]
Schwanengasse 9
Case postale 6853
3001 Bern
Tel.: 031 398 26 10
http://www.csbfc.ch

Société Suisse des employés de commerce (SEC Suisse)
[Swiss Society of Commercial Workers]
Secrétariat romand
Rue Saint-Honoré 3
Case postale 3072
2001 Neuchâtel 1
Tel.: 032 721 21 37
http://www.secsuisse.ch

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