

JOINT DECLARATION OF INTENT
on the Cooperation of Vocational and Professional Education and Training,
Career and Technical Education and Apprenticeships
between the
Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research
of the Swiss Confederation, of the one part, and
the U.S. Department of Commerce, the U.S. Department of Education, and the U.S.
Department of Labor,
of the other part

The Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research of the Swiss Confederation, of the one part, and the Departments of Commerce, Education and Labor of the United States of America, of the other part (collectively referred to herein as “the Participants”) share a common belief in the importance of promoting education and training as a factor in individual development and achievement, economic development, and social growth, as well as a means for strengthening the ties between the two countries. The Participants also acknowledge the significance of supporting education and training programs built in partnership with employers—particularly career and technical education, vocational and professional education and training, and apprenticeships (collectively referred to herein as Education and Training Systems: See Appendix for definitions) with the aim of providing businesses with access to more highly-skilled workers and helping individuals fulfill their potential in achieving superior theoretical and technical skills, thereby promoting productivity and economic growth, improving compensation for workers, and creating greater pathways to quality careers.

This Joint Declaration of Intent provides a framework in which the Participants may identify and explore cooperation in the area of Education and Training Systems, increase learning from one another, and fosters joint future initiatives and measures as a result of this cooperation.

The Participants intend that, in order to pursue these mutual objectives, the following activities may be conducted, on mutually approved topics at mutually approved times and subject to available resources, during the term of this Joint Declaration of Intent:

1. Cooperation in Education and Training Systems’ approaches, jointly determined by the Participants, which may include one or more of the following focus areas (in no particular order):
 - Industry- and/or Market-driven work-based training;
 - Collaboration with the business sector operating in each country to promote the value and benefits that Education and Training Systems can bring to companies and the workforce; and
 - Exchange of information, experience and good practices including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Transition from school and training to careers and the labor market;
 - Organization of Education and Training Systems;
 - Opportunities for Education and Training Systems to provide pathways to higher education, careers and lifelong learning;
 - Cross-employer recognition of competencies and professional credentials and other pertinent industry and education credentials;
 - Education and training of teachers and trainers;
 - Models of curricula for education and training programs;

- Research about Education and Training Systems;
 - Involvement and role of public and private stakeholders (e.g., business, education providers, social partners) in Education and Training Systems; and
 - Expansion and/or adoption of Education and Training Systems into new industries and/or occupations.
2. Methods of cooperation the Participants intend to utilize (as appropriate and feasible) in the areas identified in Part 1 may include, but are not limited to:
 - Exchange of information, experience and good practices;
 - Consultations at the governmental level;
 - Fact-finding visits and expert meetings; and
 - Fostering and encouraging direct contacts, partnerships and cooperation activities between businesses, organizations, institutions and other stakeholders in the field of Education and Training Systems – taking due consideration of the autonomy of these stakeholders.
 3. Other methods, activities, and topics of cooperation may be decided by the Participants during the term of this Joint Declaration of Intent.
 4. In accordance with this Joint Declaration of Intent, the methods, activities, and topics of cooperation may be further devised by the Participants in a periodically revised work plan. Switzerland's State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research and the United States Departments of Commerce, Education, and Labor intend to jointly develop such a work plan.

This Joint Declaration of Intent is intended to continue for a period of three years from the date the Participants sign it, and may be modified jointly by the Participants or discontinued by any of the Participants at any time during that period. To discontinue this Joint Declaration of intent, the intending Participant should endeavor to provide notice of its intent to discontinue, in writing, 30 days in advance to the other Participants. Any activity carried out under this Joint Declaration of Intent is to be in accordance with the respective, applicable national laws and regulations and within the framework of the respective national policies and procedures of each Participant. This Joint Declaration of Intent does not itself obligate or authorize the expenditure of any funds by any Participant. Nothing in this Joint Declaration of Intent obligates the Participants to enter into any contract or other obligations.