



Factsheet on proof of language skills when granting a residence or permanent residence permit from 01.01.2019

Requirements

The revised Foreign Nationals and Integration Act (FNIA) and the revised Ordinance on Admission, Period of Stay and Employment (ASEO) specify the criteria for integration and thus the requirements related to language skills as well. The relevant provisions refer to *minimum language requirements* (see Art 73a ASEO). This also follows from the system of competencies laid down in the law on foreign nationals, which assumes that the Confederation has a right to refuse consent if certain minimum requirements under federal law are not met.

Granting or extending the residence permit of citizens of a third country or inclusion in temporary admission:

Who	Requirement
Family reunification for a third country national who holds a B, C or F permit	Knowledge of the national language spoken at the place of residence: Oral A1 or enrolment in a language course that will allow this level to be acquired.
Following dissolution of the marriage (after at least three years marriage and fulfilment of the criteria for integration)	Knowledge of the national language spoken at the place of residence: Oral A1
Persons providing religious instruction and other teaching staff from third countries	Knowledge of the national language spoken at the place of work: Oral B1, Written A1

Granting the permanent residence permit:

Who	Requirement
Ordinary granting of a permanent residence permit after 5 or 10 years. Citizens of the following countries are exempted: Belgium, Netherlands, Italy, France, Austria, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Liechtenstein. ¹	Knowledge of the national language spoken at the place of residence: Oral A2, Written A1

¹ Exceptions based on permanent residence agreements between Switzerland and these countries.

Reissue of a permanent residence permit after downgrading or following a stay abroad.	Knowledge of the national language spoken at the place of residence: Oral A2, Written A1
Early grant of a permanent residence permit after 5 years.	Knowledge of the national language spoken at the place of residence: Oral B1, Written A1

Providing proof

- a) Language skills are regarded as proven if the applicant
- speaks and writes the national language spoken at their place of residence as their mother tongue;
 - has attended compulsory schooling in a national language for a minimum of three years; or
 - has completed education or training in a national language at upper secondary level (e.g. an apprenticeship, baccalaureate school (*Gymnasium*) or upper secondary specialised school (*Fachmittelschule*)) or tertiary level (e.g. university, university of applied sciences).

The applicant need not have attended school or completed education or training at upper secondary or tertiary level *in Switzerland*. What is decisive is the language of teaching.

- b) If the applicant is unable to meet any of the three above-mentioned requirements, they must provide recognised proof of language proficiency that certifies that they have the required language skills.

Recognised proof of language proficiency is:

- the Language Passport² or
- a recognised language certificate in accordance with the list of recognised language certificates³; this also includes the fide proof of language proficiency

These certificates meet the quality standards required under the ASEO.

Exemptions from providing proof

If serious personal circumstances, such as a physical or mental disability or a learning difficulty, make it difficult or impossible for a person to acquire a language, the person may be granted a complete or partial exemption from the requirement to prove their language skills. The applicant must submit proof of the disability or learning difficulty concerned.

Transitional arrangement

In a transitional arrangement, until 31 December 2019 certain certificates providing proof of language skills that do not meet the generally recognised quality standards will still be accepted. The cantons are also free to decide in the first year which certificates they will accept as proof. This transition period does not apply to persons providing religious instruction and teaching staff.

² See <https://www.fide-info.ch/de/sprachnachweise>

³ See <https://www.fide-info.ch/de/sprachnachweise>

Further information

- FAQs on proof of language skills
- You will find information on fide in general and on the language passport, fide proof of language proficiency and on the list of recognised language certificates in particular on the fide website: www.fide-info.ch