

# MEDICAL STUDIES COST FOUR TIMES LESS THAN ANNOUNCED

swimsa press release, 17 October 2024

- **Medical studies are regularly singled out for their allegedly exorbitant costs. This is largely incorrect.**
- **Official statistics are misunderstood. The most commonly quoted figure is CHF 120,000 per student per year. This is four times higher than the best available estimates of around CHF 30,000 per student per year.**
- **This confusion has worrying implications. It contributes to a negative public perception of medical studies and hinders the creation of new training places, which are essential if we are to tackle the shortage of doctors in Switzerland.**

swimsa represents more than 10,000 medical students in Switzerland. Discussions about the cost of medical studies are widespread in the media, political bodies, and public debates. swimsa wishes to share its perspective on this matter. We have observed that a figure is frequently cited to quantify the cost of medical studies: 120,000 CHF per year per student. While this estimate comes from official data published by the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) and the EKOH project\*, it includes much more than the costs of our medical education.

In reality, this figure includes all financial resources allocated to scientific research within medical faculties, such as regular research budgets as well as "third-party funds", which include exceptional grants and private funding from companies or foundations. For example, a multimillion-franc grant from a foundation for research associated with a medical faculty is currently unfairly interpreted as an expense related to our education. By examining the same data from the FSO and the EKOH project using the appropriate cost indicator, we find that the true annual cost of training a medical student is close to 30,000 CHF\*\*. Furthermore, we emphasize that this figure does not take into account the contributions made by students during their 6-year curriculum, particularly during their practical internships at the hospital or their research.

It is time to correct this misunderstanding. With the increasing demand for doctors, it is crucial to increase the number of study places in medical faculties. To achieve this, it is essential that public debate is based on accurate figures, enabling informed decisions that benefit society. This is necessary to guarantee a sustainable growth of our healthcare workforce and meet future medical needs.

For any questions, please contact : [advocacy@swimsa.ch](mailto:advocacy@swimsa.ch)

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\* Erhebung der Kosten für die Lehre und Forschung der Humanmedizin

\*\* 28,203CHF according to the FSO (2023), 31,108CHF according to the EKOH project (2022)

### Useful information:

- swimsa statement on the cost of medical studies, attached
- Data from the FSO, available at the following link:  
<https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/fr/home/statistiques/education-science/finances-systeme/hautes-ecoles.assetdetail.28945150.html>
- Data from the project "Erhebung der Kosten für die Lehre und Forschung der Humanmedizin (EKOH)", available at: <https://shk.ch/de/dokumentation/publikationen/226-projekt-ekoh>