In contrast to other areas of tertiary-level professional education (PE), teacher training has never come under the auspices of the Confederation, and has remained an exclusively cantonal matter for both funding and regulation. This institutional characteristic is a distinguishing feature between the UTEs and universities of applied sciences (UAS).

The Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education has issued national recognition regulations (Diplomanerkennungsrecht) for the various teaching profession qualifications, in order to ensure freedom of entry to the profession throughout the country and international recognition of teaching qualifications despite their cantonal origin. The regulations have established standards in core areas such as the structure of courses, admission requirements and the qualification of lecturers, which must be met to ensure mutual recognition (EDK, 1999a, 1999b). The EDK’s assessment following its most recent evaluation of the progress made by the recognition regulations is positive. It maintains that the EDK’s practice of recognising courses guarantees professional mobility of teachers and the minimum level of quality for teacher training (EDK, 2016b). Institutional accreditation of the universities themselves is done by the Swiss Accreditation Council on the basis of the new Higher Education Funding and Coordination Act (HEFCA) at national level and the Higher Education Concordat at cantonal level (chapter Tertiary-level education, page 169).

The list includes the 15 universities of teacher education in Switzerland (including departments and schools located within the UAS) that offer general courses for training of teachers for compulsory education. These 15 UTEs cover 95% of all students on courses for compulsory education (pre-school, primary level and lower-secondary education).

The Inter connaîtional University for Special Needs Education (HfH) is a university of teacher education that specialises in special needs education.