



Empowering medical students

the role of
Swiss libraries in information literacy
training

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Outline

- Swiss medical schools and PROFILES
- Information literacy (IL) and PROFILES
- Swiss Medical Libraries
 - Current landscape of information literacy training
- Opportunities
 - National synergies
- Conclusion

Swiss Medical Schools

The Joint Commission of the Swiss Medical Schools (SMIFK/CIMS) has defined PROFILES:

- a common set of learning objectives (knowledge, skills and behaviours) that students of medical faculties should reach by the end of their undergraduate medical training

PROFILES, according to the Federal Act on the University Medical Professions (MedBG/LPMéd) :

- defines the contents of the Federal Licensing Examination (FLE);
- is a prerequisite for the accreditation of the curricula of the Swiss faculties of medicine

[Formation prégraduée | ISFM](#)

Information Literacy

- Recognizing Information Needs
 - Understand when and why information is needed
- Finding and Evaluating Information
 - Identify where to find reliable sources and assess their usability
- Using Information Creatively and Ethically
 - Apply information effectively to create new knowledge or products
- A Lifelong, Critical Process
 - Goes beyond isolated training – encourages critical thinking in all information encounters
- Foundation for Lifelong Learning
 - Essential skill in today's information-rich culture

Information Literacy and PROFILES

CanMEDS Role	General Objective	Connection to Information Literacy
Scholar	GO 6.2 GO 6.3 GO 6.5	Direct: searching, appraising, integrating medical evidence
Medical Expert	GO 1.15 GO 1.16	Indirect: managing data, using research in clinical practice
Leader/Manager	GO 4.1 GO 4.8	Indirect: gathering/analyzing public health data, quality improvement
Health Advocate	GO 5.2	Indirect: using surveillance info and evidence for preventive care

PROFILES objectives



GO 6.2 Apply principles of critical appraisal of sources to the best available evidence-based medical information. Identify ethical principles that apply to basic and clinical research



GO 6.3 Demonstrate the critical use of information technology to access accurate and reliable (online) medical information, taking into account the levels of evidence provided by the medical literature, and integrating it into patient care



GO 6.5 Identify and develop a research question or hypothesis, work out a procedure to address the issue, analyse and synthesize the results, and publish these as a scientific report or article. Effectively present medical information based on scientific evidence

Bachelor level : basic searching skills

University	When Taught	Format	Mandatory	Key Content	Assessment
Basel	BMed1	Hybrid	Yes	Catalogue, PubMed basics, Boolean	Online test, OSCE
Bern	BMed3	Workshop	Yes	Search strategy, documentation	Participation
Geneva	All years	Integrated	Yes	Source ID, evaluation, citation	Varies by module
Lausanne	BMed3	Plenary followed by workshops	Yes	Intro to Databases and searching	Informal, participation
Zürich	BMed1	Online (FIT-1)	Yes	Swisscovery, PubMed, citation	Pass/fail MCQ

Comparison

- All five university libraries are involved in mandatory basic search instruction early in the Bachelor program (mostly in BMed1 or BMed3)
- Zürich uniquely uses a fully online self-study model with a test, while Bern, Basel, and Geneva include interactive or hybrid components
- Geneva and Bern embed basic skills within a broader competency framework and ensure iterative development of skills across years
- Lausanne incorporates IL instruction progressively, starting with basic concepts and advancing toward Master-level research needs
- Basel provides the earliest hands-on exposure, including a structured hybrid model with OSCE preparation

Master Level: Advanced Searching Skills

University	When Taught	Format	Mandatory	Advanced Skills	Notes
Basel	MMed1–2	Hybrid/Elective	No	MeSH, truncation, EndNote	Part of WIKO Flex
Bern	MMed1–3	Modular	Yes	Systematic search, Open Science	Deep writing integration
Geneva	MMed1–2	Workshops	Yes	Systematic review, ethics	Tied to thesis prep
Lausanne	MMed1–3	Individual	No	Search coaching, tools	Flexible support
Zürich	MMed1	Online (FIT-2)	Yes	PubMed, Embase, Zotero	Linked to thesis upload

Key Differences between Medical Libraries

- Geneva: Embedded IL guided by academic staff
- Zürich: Efficient tech-based self-study model
- Basel: Early strong foundation + flexible electives
- Lausanne: Flexible coaching, on-demand, less structure
- Bern: Structured, progressive IL across years

Bern

The Bern medical library's comprehensive program gives students the best opportunity to master the full set of information literacy skills required for Swiss medical graduates:

- **Comprehensive** - basic to advanced
- **Structured** - progressive across years
- **Integrated** - within curricular and extracurricular activities
- **Aligned** - to PROFILES objectives and EPAs
- **Evaluated** - adapted continuously

Opportunities – National Level



Strengthen National Synergies:

Create partnerships for IL teaching approaches across Swiss medical schools



Coordinate Beyond Medicine

Engage with polytechnics and hospitals to integrate IL into interdisciplinary medical, engineering, and health sciences curricula



Shared Resources & Training

Develop shared digital IL resources, case studies, and online modules accessible to all Swiss students in the fields of medical, nursing, and allied health professions



Joint Research & Evaluation

Conduct national studies to measure IL competency impact on clinical reasoning and lifelong learning



Policy & Advocacy

Influence national education policy on IL through the joint commission of the Swiss Medical Schools (SMIFK/CIMS) and professional associations.



Prepare for AI-Integrated Healthcare

Equip students with the skills to critically assess AI-generated information, understand algorithmic biases, and ethically integrate AI tools into research and clinical decision-making

Conclusion

- Empowering the Next Generation
 - Swiss medical libraries are vital partners in shaping competent, reflective, and research-savvy doctors
- From Skills to Lifelong Learning
 - Information literacy is not just a study requirement—it's a professional necessity
- A Shared Mission:
 - Finding opportunities for collaboration across institutions will multiply our impact and ensure consistency in training quality
- Looking Ahead:
 - As AI becomes an everyday partner in healthcare, information literacy will expand to include AI literacy—helping future doctors, nurses and allied health personnel to use these tools wisely, verify outputs, and maintain patient trust

"Together, we turn information into knowledge, and knowledge into better care."

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