Guide for newcomers

Useful information for new members of the ISTE

This text has been adapted from the document “A guide for newcomers, How to get started at IDYST, at UNIL and in Switzerland in general”. Note that this is not an official document. ISTE does not take responsibility for possible mistakes or inaccuracies. Official UNIL policies and regulations are available here:


Authors of the present document: Secretariat ISTE
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Welcome to the ISTE!

Here you will find useful information that should help you as you prepare to make the move to UNIL.

General information about moving to Lausanne and Switzerland in general:

- Checklist from the UNIL welcome center
- Arriving in Switzerland

1. Before arrival

1.1. Visa

Are you a citizen of a non-EU/EEA country?

- Then you need a VISA to travel to Switzerland and take up your employment

- Visa application needs to be submitted from abroad

- Consult the Swiss consular authorities in your country of residence as soon as possible after receiving your employment offer

- We recommend you to contact directly the ISTE secretariat (secretariat-iste@unil.ch) if you need specific information to begin your visa application process

For official information visit the following link: Visa – Entry to and residence in Switzerland

1.2. Work and residence permit

For both non-EU and EU citizens, a work permit is required before taking up employment in Switzerland. This permit is obtained after arrival in Switzerland in your city of residence.

You would need your work contract as well as other documents, which would be provided to you by the ISTE secretariat (secretariat-iste@unil.ch) in order to obtain a residence permit.

- For practical information regarding the residence permit visit: Practical information – Residence permit – Canton of Vaud
- For general and specific information regarding entry, residence, working and free movement visit: State Secretariat for Migration SEM

1.3. Finding a flat

You need to find a flat in Lausanne? Check these useful pages to find your perfect flat:

- Shared Apartments
- Facebook Group
If you are searching for your own apartment, these links should be helpful:

- Comparis
- Apartments
- Anibis

1.4. Living costs in Switzerland

Generally, the cost of living in Switzerland is high. However, the ultimate living cost of an individual will generally depend on living habits and preferences. Below is an indicative student budget.

The basic student budget is around CHF 1950.- per month

This amount includes, in addition to enrolment and semester fees:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living and food expenses</td>
<td>CHF 850 to 900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation (not including expenses for heating, water, electricity, telephone, etc.)</td>
<td>CHF 600 to 800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and accident insurance</td>
<td>CHF 150 to 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books and course material</td>
<td>CHF 100 to 150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. At arrival / first days

2.1. Local municipal authority registration

First thing to do when you arrive to Switzerland:

- Register with the local municipal authority within 8 days of arrival!

- Check out the following webpage for more information: Check list of Arrival – Canton of Vaud. Check out the “Welcome” brochure, where you will find all the practical information you need!

2.2. Bank account

You need a Swiss bank account to receive your salary.

Here are some options of banks you can check: List of Swiss cantonal and regional banks

Notice that there is a BCV branch in the campus, inside the “INTERNEF” building.

Are you a French resident? There are generally two options for a bank account. The first (more straightforward) option is to open a bank account in Switzerland. Alternatively, it is possible to open a bank account in France which also includes a CHF account. In this scenario, you would have both a Euro and CHF bank card which
can be used in both countries. This way, you do not pay conversion fees between a Swiss bank and a bank in France. However, the exchange rate is not fixed. This option is only available in some banks e.g. Crédit Mutuel (https://www.creditmutuel.fr/fr/frontaliers/suisse/comptes-virements.html).

**Important:** When your CHF account is opened, remember to send your bank account details (a RIB / IBAN) to the ISTE secretariat (secretariat-iste@unil.ch) so that your salary can be paid.

### 2.3. Taxes

All foreign workers who do not have a C residence permit have the taxes payable to the federal state, canton and municipality deducted at source from their salary. Taxes payable depend on your civil status and whether you have children or not. Therefore, be sure to communicate any changes in your family situation to the ISTE secretariat as soon as possible.

If you want more information you can check this link on taxes in the canton of Vaud: [Les impôts dans le canton de Vaud](#).

### 2.4. Transportation

You have different options regarding the mobility in Lausanne and in Switzerland:

- **Half fare or GA Swisspass:** Pay half of the price!
- **Lausanne public transportation:** for local public transport you have special offers that enable you to travel within Lausanne
- **Daily pass:** Other interesting deals for train tickets are the day passes that you can buy for about 40 CHF at your municipality (exact price depends on the municipality you are registered at, search for “carte jounalière <municipality name>”) or the
  - **Super saver tickets**
  - **Cars can be rented in multiple car rental offices in Lausanne, but you can also use the 'Mobility cars'.**
  - **Bikes:**
    - 'PointVélo' at EPFL
    - Facebook marketplace
    - Other second hand websites.
    - You can have your bike repaired for free at the ‘Atelier vélo’ located right next to Géopolis.
    - Rent a bike. If you don't want to buy a bike, you can rent the purple PubliBikes that are spread all over the campus (50 CHF per year).

### 2.5. Health insurance

After moving to Switzerland, you have three months to take out the mandatory (basic) health insurance. As an employee of the University of Lausanne, you are already insured against accidents and can therefore **exclude accident coverage** when taking out a health insurance policy.

- **Health insurance for newcomers**
- **If you want to compare different health insurance companies**
• Foreign Student Health Insurance Switzerland: SwissCare

3. First weeks / ISTE life

3.1. Registration at the ISTE Secretariat

The first thing you should do when you arrive and leave the Institute is contact the secretariat (office 3646; mailto: secretariat-iste@unil.ch), where you will have to check an “Arrival and departure” document (campus card, contract, IT access, mailbox, etc...).

The ISTE secretariat is your main point of contact for all administrative things in the university and the Institute. Anne-Marie Chagros and Anne Besse can help you if you need any information concerning the university in general and the ISTE in particular. Krystel Fazzi will guide you in case you have any question regarding accounting issues.

3.2. ISTE Website

The ISTE website grants you access to the information you would usually require concerning everything in the institute.

• If you would like to transmit/publish/edit information about your research or events please contact Anne-Marie Chagros (anne-marie.chagros@unil.ch)
• Personal website on MyUnil: It is the responsibility of each individual to keep it updated. The guidelines concerning this can be found on the UNIL Intranet
• For internal (WordPress) websites regarding your research group, please contact your research group leader

3.3. Sick leave / illness notification

Illness and accidents are governed by the directive 1.28 of the UNIL direction.

• In the event of sickness/accident, please send an email to or the ISTE secretariat (secretariat-iste@unil.ch)
• In case of accident, fill in the form for accident declaration. It can be found on the human resources website - Internal forms - UNIL Human Resources

3.4. Protection of the health of pregnant or breastfeeding women

Once the employee informs her hierarchical superior of her pregnancy, the superior has to proceed to an evaluation of the working environment of the pregnant woman in order to identify any dangers to which the employee or her child could be exposed. This document and its annex guides the hierarchical superior(s) in doing so.

3.5. Resources in case of workplace harassment

In case of an ISTE employee feels harassed or threatened at his workplace, by collaborators of any hierarchical level, she or he may contact any of the following people. It is better to start with the ISTE internal contact persons.
• ISTE internal contact persons for harassment: Krystel Fazzi (krystel.fazzi@unil.ch)

• UNIL mediation service: contact.mediation@unil.ch; mediator Mr. Luc Wenger: +41 079 240 42 46 and Ms. Raymonde Richter: +41 079 643 24 16 (rr@etuderichter.ch)

• Psychotherapy service by UNIL: consult psy-unil@chuv.ch

• UNIL psychologists: +41 21 692 45 70

3.6. Laboratory support

For any support or questions related to laboratories, please address Dr. Benita Putlitz (benita.putlitz@unil.ch)

3.7. Economat, letterbox, correspondence

Letterbox is located in office 3641, close to the secretariat. The post arrives usually after 10am every morning. You can deposit letters to be sent there (every day before 3pm). Please note that only official or work-related letters/parcels are sent and paid for by UNIL for staff. Private mail must have the appropriate stamps in order to be sent from the ISTE mailroom.

3.8. Holidays

Regarding holidays, all UNIL employees are governed by the general rules of the Canton de Vaud. The following general rules apply:

• Employees employed at 100% have 5 weeks of holidays (6 weeks after the age of 60)
• Holidays can be requested via email to the supervisor at least 4 weeks before the holiday date
• The number of holiday days is proportional to the percentage of employment. 100% employment = 25 holiday days / year. 80% employment = 20 holiday days / year

For more information contact the ISTE secretariat (secretariat-iste@unil.ch)

To help you out, please use this file Holidays form file maker

3.9. Computer-Hardware

Purchasing a PC based on a ‘fonds d’État’ (Vaud funding) needs to follow the guidelines of the UNIL ‘Centre Informatique’ (informatics center). Every request for purchase of new equipment should be made via the CI using the form on their webpage - Achats informatiques-Ci UNIL and in collaboration with the supervisor (hierarchical superior).

Important: You can't ask for refund for a machine you bought on your own, without passing via the CI website!

4. After 3 months

4.1. University enrolment

University Enrolment mandatory for PhD students! PhD students that are part of the ISTE are required, under university rules, to officially enroll for the PhD program at the University of Lausanne within 1 year
of the start of their contract and latest by the thirteenth month of the contract. The necessary information concerning this can be found here – PhD students at UNIL. The information you need - UNIL IMMAT

For more information please visit the following link of the Faculty of Earth Sciences and Environment: Vademecum for PhD Students

In addition, the code of practice for the doctorate highlights the active roles and shared responsibilities of doctoral candidates and their supervisors. It can be found here: Charte_anglais_FINAL.pdf (unil.ch)

5. Within 12 months

5.1. Exchanging a foreign driving license

It is only possible to drive temporarily in Switzerland with a non-Swiss driving license. All foreigners are mandated to exchange their non-Swiss driving license for a Swiss license within the first 12 months of living in Switzerland.

Holders of foreign driver’s licenses from the following countries are exempted from the test and theory test for driving licence categories C and D, subcategories C1 and D1, as well as for the authorisation to carry out professional passenger transport with vehicles of categories B and C, subcategories B1, C1 and special category F:

- Allemagne
- Autriche
- Belgique
- Bulgarie
- Bulgarie
- Chypre
- Croatie
- Danemark
- Espagne
- Estonie
- Finlande
- France
- Grande-Bretagne
- Grèce
- Hongrie
- Irlande
- Italie
- Liechtenstein
- Lituanie
- Lettonie
- Luxembourg
- Malte
- Norvège
- Pays-Bas
- Pologne
- Portugal
- Roumanie
- Slovaquie
- Slovénie
- Suède
- Tchéquie, rép.

Holders of foreign driving licenses are only exempted from the test run, if they come from:

- Andorre
- Australie
- Austrália
- Canada
- Corée du Nord
- Corée du Sud
- Israel
- Japon
- Nouvelle-Zélande
- Saint-Marin
- Singapour
- Tunisie
- Etats-Unis
- Maroc
- Monaco
- Taiwan

For more information regarding the exchange of the foreign driving license, please visit the following link: Permis de conduire Vaud
6. Other useful information

6.1. Academic calendar

The university academic calendar can be found here: Academic calendar - UNIL IMMAT

6.2. Information for faculty members

6.2.1 Research support

A support network is available to support faculty members during the various steps of their projects. A good starting point are the following pages:

- Contacts - UNIL Researcher’s Portal
- Research support (unil.ch)

During the first step of the development of a project, the following links may be important:

- Access to bibliography
- Search for project partners
- Reflection on Data, their size, analysis, protection and encryption
- Reflection on archiving: link to UNIRIS
- Réflexion sur les questions déontologiques et éthiques:
  - CER-UNIL: UNIL Ethical Commission for research (outside the scope of the LRH)
  - CER-VD: Commission cantonale d’éthique de la recherche sur l’être humain (within the scope of the LRH)

6.2.2 Access to main publication resources

The main publication resources available to researchers at UNIL include:

- Earth Sciences library or contact the librarian, Mme Catherine Schlegel Rey (bibliost@unil.ch).
- Bibliothèque cantonale et universitaire - BCU Lausanne (bcu-lausanne.ch)
- Academic and Cantonal Database: SERVAL

6.2.3 Data storage and archiving

For questions regarding storage and archiving of research data, the point of call is the UNIL UNIRIS team. Contact: Carmen Jambé (carmen.jambe@unil.ch), Unicentre

Regarding Open Access at UNIL: Dr. Micaela Crespo Quesada (micaela.crespo@unil.ch), Unicentre

6.2.4. Funding

A good source of information regarding funding: Funding - UNIL Researcher’s Portal

If you write an application to obtain funding, Amélie Dreiss is there to help you. Contact: Géopolis - bureau 4613, Tél: +41 (0)21 692 35 05, mail: amelie.dreiss@unil.ch
6.2.5. Teaching support center

The UNIL teaching support center is available for questions regarding teaching support: Soutien à l'enseignement (CSE) - CSE UNIL.

6.3. Practical things

6.3.1 Swiss Mobile Phone Apps

Here is a list of phone apps that are useful to have:

- SBB App (Swiss Railway) : to look up transport timetables in all Switzerland, buy tickets and more
- TL Lausanne : accurate information regarding timetables for public transport in Lausanne
- Swisstopo : to plan your hike on the swiss maps, and know your GPS location
- Rega Swiss helicopter rescue service in the mountains - become a member for 30.- CHF / year to be saved for free in the mountains (only in case of serious accident)
- Too good to go : order cheap food that is leftover (from bakeries, restaurants, etc.)
- Meteoswiss : official weather app of Switzerland
- Meteoblue : another useful weather forecast app
- Swiss Postcard App : to create a postcard from your phone picture(s) and send it to someone for free
- SchweizMobil : to plan hiking trips
- SwissMap : another map application for orientation and navigation
- SLF : to learn about snow - and avalanche conditions

6.3.2 Taking passport photos in Lausanne

For administrative purposes, you may need passport photos in your first few weeks in Lausanne.

You can find photo booths in most train stations, cost around CHF 10.

6.3.3 Insurance for French residents (LAMal or French CMU-frontier system)

To sign up for the French CMU-frontier system, an application must be filled and submitted to CPAM with the necessary attachments within 3 months of signing a UNIL contract. More information is available here: Travailleur frontalier suisse.

6.3.4 Parents and children

For family questions, childcare facilities, couple and mobility, family carers, all informations here : families at unil.

7. ISTE admin: finances, car rental, hotel bookings, etc

7.1. Invoices & orders

If you have an invoice or you are asking for a reimbursement, please contact Krystel Fazzi (krystel.fazzi@unil.ch, office 3646, Geopolis bulding). She will give you general guidelines and details on how to proceed.
7.1.1 Invoices

All invoices must be accompanied by either the corresponding order form or the delivery note and approved and signed by the supervisor. He/she should note either the fund number, or the IO (Internal Order) on which he/she would like this invoice to be recorded.

7.1.2 Orders

Up to CHF 500, the Director of the Institute must countersign the order before it is concluded, except for orders made by professors who can authorize orders of up to CHF 3000.

Up to CHF 10’000, the Director of the Institute and the Dean of the Faculty must sign.

7.2. Expense report (note de frais)

Expense reports are required when you need to be reimbursed for a purchase or an expense you have incurred on behalf of ISTE. The form can be found on the ISTE Intranet: Forms ISTE, download and fill the “Reimbursement form”.

It is important to note that expense forms should be correctly filled and submitted as soon as possible after reception.

A couple of important points to note:

a) Remember to write the IBAN number and in the case of a bank account abroad, the SWIFT number

b) Please tape (not glue) original receipts (copies are not accepted) on an A4 sheet of paper. Make sure not to use staples. The expense form should be printed in portrait mode and not in landscape mode

c) For expenses in foreign currency the original receipt must be attached together with an excerpt of the exchange rate to Swiss Francs on the day the payment was made. This exchange rate must be from the following webpage: https://www.oanda.com/lang/fr/currency/converter/. Important: The date of the exchange rate must be the same as the one of the invoice or receipt

d) If you paid with your credit card, attach your receipt with a copy of your credit card statement. This will ensure that your credit card charges are refunded

e) Write the receipt no. on the receipts and next to the different lines in the excel document

f) You and your supervisor must sign the expense form

g) Important! You must keep a copy of your refund form and receipts

To find out what expenses are reimbursable, the service expense guideline webpage can be consulted. Alternatively, you can ask your supervisor.
7.3. Institute credit card

Purchases can be made using the ISTE credit card. Please contact Krystel Fazzi (krystel.fazzi@unil.ch).

7.4. Vehicles

ISTE has 1 Dacia and 5 bus T5 WW. If you want to rent a vehicle, please contact Anne Besse (anne.besse@unil.ch).

7.5. Hotel reservation

If you need to book a hotel for your visitors, please contact Krystel Fazzi (krystel.fazzi@unil.ch).

The following is a non-exhaustive list of the hotels that UNIL is associated with:

- Hôtel des Voyageurs (near center of Lausanne - Flon metro stop)
- Hôtel Continental (near Lausanne train station)
- Hôtel Agora Swiss Night (near Lausanne train station)
- Swiss Tech Hotel (EPFL)

7.6. Decision instances and representatives

The ISTE council meets every month to discuss matters such as budget, strategy, investments, regulations, nominations, and other topics about the life of the Institute. The members are permanent teaching ISTE staff, as well as representatives from the assistants and technical staff.

The faculty council meets also every month to take important decisions such as the hiring and promotion of professors, study plans strategy. The members are professors, technical staff, assistants and students representatives.

If you have questions or matters regarding the functioning of the Institute or the Faculty, you can contact the member that most represents you.