



International student guide

Your next chapter starts in Switzerland

Unil.

University of Lausanne

Lausanne and region

TRAVEL TIME WITH
PUBLIC TRANSPORTS

UNIL → FLON: 12 MIN

UNIL → CHUV: 20 MIN

TRAIN METRO





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01

Welcome to Unil

Key institution in Swiss higher education and research, the University of Lausanne (Unil) brings together some 17,000 students, along with over 5,500 staff members committed to supporting them.

Interdisciplinarity and excellence in the heart of Europe

Our activities are structured around three main areas, providing an interdisciplinary and comprehensive education to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow:

- Humanities and social sciences
- Life sciences
- Environmental sciences

The University of Lausanne also benefits from its ideal location in the heart of the Lake Geneva region. Lausanne, ranked among the 20 best student cities in the world, is a vibrant economic and scientific centre. The city hosts many major companies and institutions, offering unique opportunities, both academically and personally, in an environment that fosters wellbeing.

Our reputation is enhanced by many assets and further strengthened by our international university exchange partnerships.

✎ IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"Life in Lausanne is amazing. The people on campus are kind, supportive, and always ready to help."

Guangning,
Shandong University, China



Unil is...

A modern campus with exceptional facilities

With state-of-the-art laboratories, spacious lecture halls, and top-tier sports facilities, we ensure an environment conducive to your intellectual and physical development.

An outstanding location on the shores of Lake Geneva

With extensive green spaces, forests, and rivers, we are actively committed to preserving biodiversity and promoting sustainable management. In line with our commitment to ecological diversity, we pay special attention to the Dorigny campus, a true green lung for western Lausanne. These spaces are also used as living laboratories, showcasing exemplary ecological management of our parks and gardens.

An institution with a global outlook

More than a quarter of our students and nearly half of our academic staff are international. With over 300 exchange agreements in more than 50 countries and privileged partnerships with four foreign universities, our collaborative network spans the globe, notably through the CIVIS Alliance and the Worldwide Universities Network.

Environmental and social transition at the heart of our concerns

For over 30 years, we have developed pioneering initiatives to address contemporary challenges, whether in sustainable development or social innovation, with both local and global impact.

A wealth of sports and cultural activities

More than 120 sports and a wide variety of cultural activities are available. Whether you're a sports enthusiast or an arts lover, you can take part in events throughout the year, on our campus or by the shores of Lake Geneva.

Two unique faculties in Switzerland

The Faculty of Law, Criminal Justice and Public Administration (FDCA) includes the School of Criminal Justice recognized as one of the best in Europe, and even globally.

The Faculty of Geosciences and Environment (FGSE) is multidisciplinary, combining earth sciences, the study of natural environments, and research on interactions between humans and their environment.

Interdisciplinarity, one of our major strategic focuses

Our five research centres explore essential themes from various angles: sustainability, sports, mountains, life paths, and ethics. These cross-disciplinary approaches allow us to address global issues in a complementary way.

KEY NUMBERS

17,000

students

5,500

staff members

>500

exchange students per year

26%

international students at Unil

380

universities with exchange agreements (> 67 countries)

Connecting disciplines, creating impact

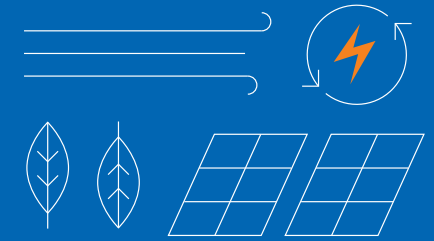
Several cross-cutting topics form the main axes of teaching and research at the University of Lausanne, enabling us to tackle global issues through an interdisciplinary approach.

Culture



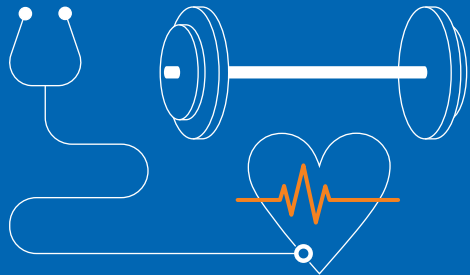
Unil allows you to delve into disciplines such as archaeology, history, literature, and the performing arts, while benefiting from rigorous and interdisciplinary research groups.

Environment



Unil gives you the opportunity to study the current ecological challenges. Through an interdisciplinary approach, you will explore issues related to the management of natural ecosystems and climate change.

Sport



Benefiting from the presence of numerous international sports federations in Lausanne, Unil plays a central role in sports science research and education. Thus, it offers bachelor's and master's programmes with five specializations: teaching, adapted physical activities and health, social sciences, training and performance, as well as sports and leisure management.

Economy



Unil, with its position in the heart of a major international economic hub, facilitates exchanges with global experts. You will benefit from a global perspective on current economic issues, in connection with contemporary debates on finance, entrepreneurship, and sustainable innovation.

Society



Unil places major social and human challenges at the heart of its teaching and research. Experts in sociology, criminology, and political science analyze contemporary transformations, enabling you to engage in local and global reflections on the evolution of our societies.

Health



Lausanne, between Lausanne University Hospital (CHUV) and Unil, stands as a global centre for research in oncology, genetics, public health, neurosciences, sports sciences, and infectious diseases. A unique opportunity for you to learn in an environment of medical and scientific excellence.

02

Explore the heart of Lausanne and its region

At the heart of the Lake Geneva region, Lausanne is located in one of Switzerland's most dynamic and innovative regions. A cosmopolitan city, it combines an exceptional quality of life – with lakes, mountains, and countryside – with a globally renowned centre for culture and science. Its ecosystem is enriched by the presence of numerous multinational companies and prestigious academic institutions, particularly in the fields of health and sport.

Lausanne, capital of the canton of Vaud

Lausanne, an academic centre of excellence

The Lake Geneva region is internationally recognized for higher education, home to prestigious institutions such as École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL – Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne), École Hôtelière de Lausanne (EHL – Hospitality Business School), École Cantonale d'Art de Lausanne (ECAL – Lausanne School of Art), and IMD Business School. These globally renowned institutions contribute to the academic excellence and attractiveness of the region.

Lausanne, Olympic capital

The city hosts the headquarters of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and numerous international sports federations, making it a global centre for sports organizations.

Switzerland, an island of safety in the heart of Europe

Renowned for its stability and low crime rate, Switzerland offers a serene and secure living environment, both in Lausanne and throughout the country.

At the top of international
rankings in several fields of
higher education:



Hospitality Business School



**Federal Institute of Technology
Lausanne**



Lausanne School of Art



Business School

KEY NUMBERS

30,000

researchers, teachers, and
students from around the
world gathered at the EPFL
and Unil campuses.

30%

of all Swiss university
students are at UNIGE, Unil,
and EPFL, making the Lake
Geneva region a major
academic hub.

40%

of European research funds
allocated to Switzerland go
to the region, highlighting
the excellence of its
scientific projects.

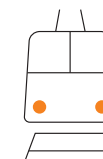


The Swiss way of life



Safety

Switzerland is one of the safest countries in the world, where you can live, study, and enjoy Lausanne's nightlife with complete peace of mind.



Transport and rail network

Lausanne invites you to explore Europe. Just 3h45 hours from Paris and 3h40 hours from Milan by a fast and convenient rail network, you can easily travel to discover new cities. Geneva International Airport is also only 45 minutes away, facilitating international connections.



Climate

Lausanne enjoys a temperate climate with four distinct seasons, ideal for outdoor activities. The proximity of the Alps, less than an hour from the city, allows for numerous skiing and chilling options.



Language

Switzerland has four official languages: German (>60% of the population), French (20% of the population), Italian (8% of the population), and Romansh (0.5% of the population). In Lausanne, you'll be immersed in a French-speaking environment, fostering intercultural exchanges.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"The campus always feels lively without ever being overcrowded, thanks to the vast open spaces and surrounding nature. Combined with the lake and mountain landscape, it's simply perfect!"

Jukka, Leuphana University,
Lüneburg, Germany

03

Studying at the University of Lausanne

The University of Lausanne offers a structured and comprehensive academic experience across its diverse faculties. With a wide range of courses and options, students can tailor their studies while benefiting from a rigorous, interdisciplinary education.

Discover our diverse fields of study

At the University of Lausanne (Unil), a generalist university, we offer a wide range of courses across 7 faculties in various fields, from the humanities to the social sciences.

With over 17,000 students enrolled in bachelor's (180 ECTS credits), master's (90–120 ECTS credits), and PhD (doctoral) programmes, Unil enables you to pursue a complete academic pathway.

Most courses are taught in French; however, a significant number of courses are available in English.



Discover them on our website here
go.unil.ch/study

Faculty of Business and Economics (HEC)

Recognized among the world's leading management and economics schools.

FR / EN

Faculty of Biology and Medicine (FBM)

Has the largest student population at Unil.

School of Medicine: renowned for its affiliation with the Lausanne University Hospital (CHUV), ranked among the top 10 hospitals in the world

FR

School of Biology: offers theoretical and practical training in renowned research laboratories

FR / EN

Faculty of Geosciences and Environment (FGSE)

Provides hands-on field training in alpine, urban, and international environments.

FR / EN

Faculty of Law, Criminal Justice and Public Administration (FDCA)

School of Law: offers comprehensive legal training for those wishing to practice law in Switzerland, with a specialization in international and comparative law at the master's level

FR

School of Criminal Justice (ESC): unique in the European French-speaking world for its comprehensive forensic science training

FR

Swiss Graduate School of Public Administration (IDHEAP): a nationally recognized institution for its master's and doctoral programmes in public management and policy

FR / EN

Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (SSP)

Covers a broad range of disciplines to understand contemporary social issues:

- Political science
- Social sciences
- Psychology
- Sports sciences

FR

Faculty of Arts

Covers over 20 disciplines, from languages to historical sciences, including video game studies.

The School of French as a Foreign Language (EFLE): see chapter "additional teaching offers"

FR / EN

The Faculty of Theology and Sciences of Religions (FTSR)

Offers an interdisciplinary approach, with certain courses taught in collaboration with other faculties.

→ Theology

→ Religious sciences

FR

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"The atmosphere at Unil is welcoming, with supportive professors, diverse student clubs, and a community where lasting friendships grow."

Rana, Università di Torino, Italy

Select your interdisciplinary courses with flexibility

When you are on exchange at Unil, you can take courses across multiple faculties, allowing you to broaden your academic journey. With this flexibility, you can explore different disciplines while building a customized study plan that aligns with your interests. A unique chance to deepen your knowledge in various areas.

Some faculties also give you the option to take a limited number of courses at the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), further enhancing your study plan's interdisciplinary aspect.

Additionally, you may attend trial courses at the beginning of the semester to confirm your academic choices.

In each of our faculties, mobility advisers are available to support you in developing your programme and to assist with your enrolment procedures.



Explore
available
courses
go.unil.ch/study



More information
on exchange
at Unil
go.unil.ch/incomingstudy

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
07				Yoga	
08	FBM: Introduction to Physics (3 ECTS)		FGSE: Tourism governance and public policy (5 ECTS)		
09		Lettres: Contemporary art and design (5 ECTS)		SSP: Understanding capitalism (6 ECTS)	EFLE: Français élémentaire (A1)
10					
11					
12					
13	Discovery meal at the Chaplaincy	French Tandem	Rowing		
14	HEC: Strategic Management (6 ECTS)				FTSR: The challenges of religious and cultural diversity in an institutional setting (5 ECTS)
15					
16					
17					Volleyball
18	ESN party	Drinks at the Zelig (Student meeting place)		Workchope (Student get-together)	
19					
20					Unil Cinéclub
21					

Access additional courses and programmes

In addition to regular faculty courses, we offer various teaching options that you can take before, during, or after your academic semester. These programmes include language courses as well as short programmes covering a variety of current topics.

EFLE (School of French as a Foreign Language)



Allows you to follow a free study plan each semester specifically designed for exchange students, helping you to improve your language skills while earning ECTS credits. A free 3-week intensive course is also offered before the start of the autumn semester, offering 3 ECTS credits, with priority given to beginner-level French students.

go.unil.ch/fle

LE FIL – Intensive French courses (summer/winter French programme)



Offers various options to help you learn or improve your French during your university holidays. This paid programme (unless a special arrangement exists with your home university) lasts 4 weeks during the inter-semester (summer and winter) and may also earn you ECTS credits.

go.unil.ch/lefil-en

Short-term programmes



We organize summer and winter schools in various interdisciplinary fields, bringing together students from around the world for intensive courses.

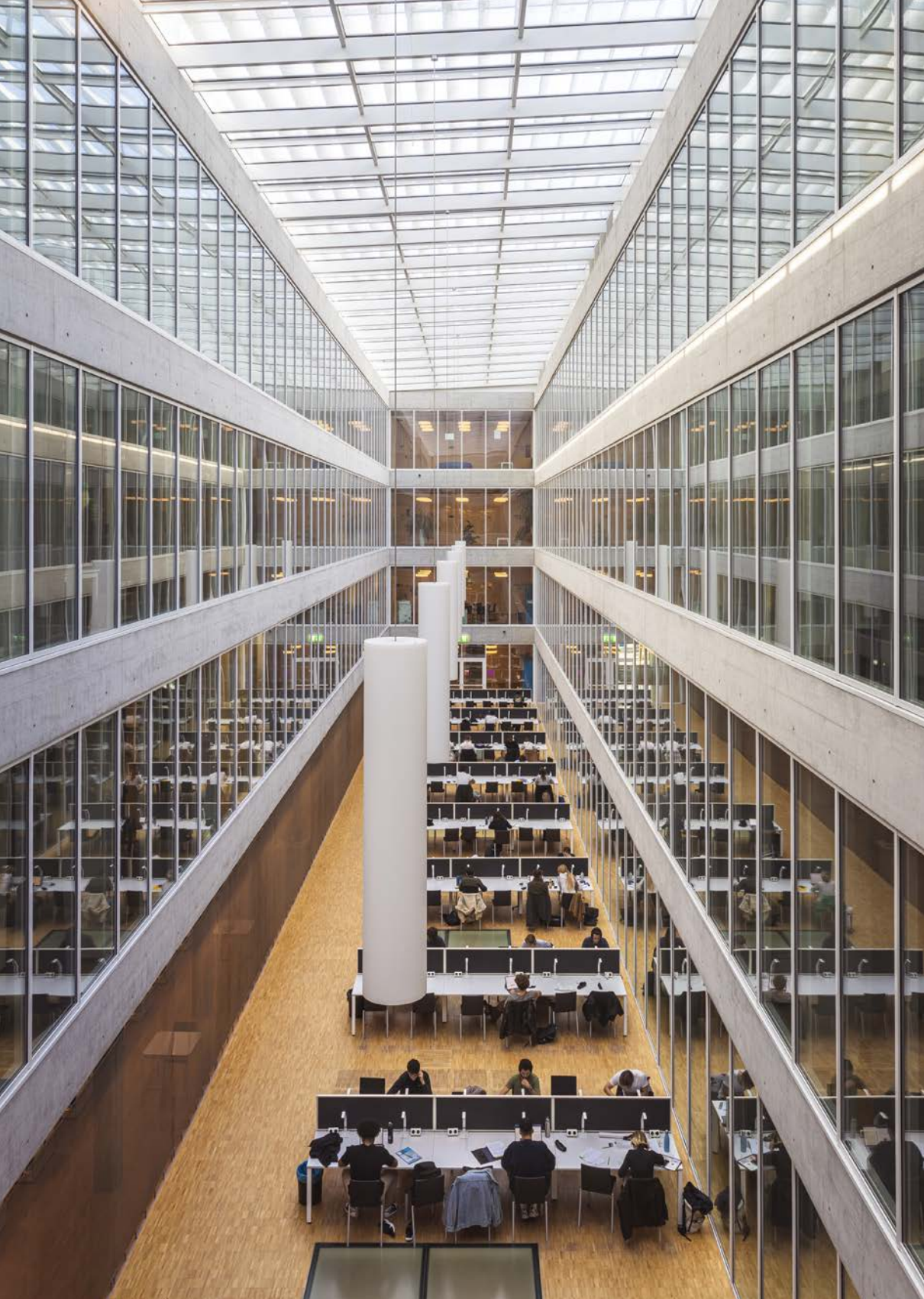
go.unil.ch/summerschools

Unil Language Centre



Offers free foreign language courses throughout the semester, including for exchange students. Under certain conditions, you may earn 5 ECTS credits for these courses.

go.unil.ch/languagecentre



Earn academic credits: ECTS credits & grading scale

At Unil, each course you take and pass earns you ECTS credits: a European credit system internationally recognized and easily transferable to other credit systems, including that of your home university.

Here are some key points to know about the ECTS credit system and the associated workload:

- A full-time semester is equivalent to 30 ECTS credits.
- Each ECTS credit represents between 25 and 30 hours of work, including both in-class hours and independent study.
- For most disciplines, we estimate that one-third of the time is spent in classes, and two-thirds on independent work.
- As an exchange student, you must take courses worth at least 15 ECTS credits per semester.

Our grading system is based on a scale from 0 to 6. You pass a course with a minimum grade of 4, while 6 is the highest grade.



More
information

go.unil.ch/incomingstudy

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"Lausanne and Unil are clearly the right choice. I had high expectations, but it's even better than I imagined. The courses are interesting, the administration is efficient, there's so much to do, and the community is fantastic."

Magdalena, Universidad Pontificia Comillas, Madrid, Spain

Timeline

The academic year at the University of Lausanne is structured to guide students through their courses, exams, and key milestones.

Autumn Semester

WEEK BEFORE THE START OF CLASSES

Orientation week and welcome session

MID-SEPTEMBER

Start of courses and autumn semester

EARLY DECEMBER

Christmas party organized by SASME

LATE DECEMBER TO MID-JANUARY

Holidays

MID-JANUARY TO LATE JANUARY

Exam period (if subjected to)

Spring Semester

WEEK BEFORE THE START OF CLASSES

Orientation week and welcome session

MID-FEBRUARY

Start of courses and spring semester

WEEK FOLLOWING EASTER WEEKEND

Course break

MAY

Discovery trip/weekend in Switzerland organized by SASME

MID-JUNE TO LATE JUNE

Exam period (if subjected to)



04

Experience life on campus

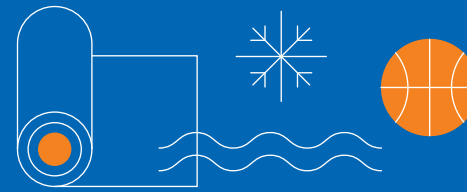


From sport to cultural events, student associations, and community initiatives, life on campus at the University of Lausanne offers a vibrant and supportive environment that enriches both personal and academic growth.

A vibrant community

Unil offers everything from sports and wellbeing to culture, dining, and student communities – making campus life truly unforgettable.

Sports and well-being



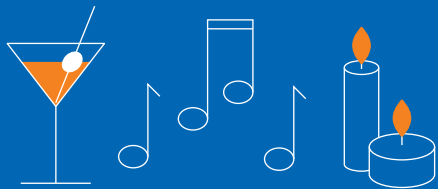
We have a magnificent sports centre, as well as a “Sport and Health” centre offering assessments, evaluations, and advice to help you get the most out of your physical activities. More than 120 sports disciplines, either free or at affordable rates, are available, along with weekend and ski/snowboard camps organized by the Sports Service.

Food and dining



You have 17 dining options to choose from on campus, offering a wide culinary variety at affordable prices, whether you’re a meat lover or vegetarian. Whether you’re looking for a quick snack or a full meal, you’ll always find a convenient option.

Relaxation, community, and culture



Located on campus, Zelig is a vibrant spot in student life, with eclectic concerts, exhibitions, table football and ping-pong tournaments, as well as comics and books available for sharing. There’s also a bar with an impressive selection of local brews.

Free and open to all, our Ciné-club organizes a themed cycle of screenings each semester, with special guests and film-concerts. A great spot to discover or rediscover cinema in all its forms.

Le Théâtre de la Grange, located on our campus, is a centre for theatrical research and experimentation. Enjoy a rich cultural programme throughout the year.

Our chaplaincy (“Aumônerie”) is a place that encourages social connections, dialogue, and mutual learning through meals, outings, discussions, and moments of spirituality. A true space for reflection and sharing.

Student life & associations



More than 140 student associations are active at Unil. Whether you wish to get involved in representative organizations, cultural activities, or simply want to discover a new passion, you’ll certainly find the community that suits you best.

Resources for your studies



Our 11 libraries, true treasure troves of information for your studies, offer you study rooms and spaces designed to foster concentration. Here, you’ll find all the resources you need to succeed in your academic journey.

Discover the key events of your semester

Social Affairs and Student Mobility Office (SASME)

Each year, we organize a welcome event for new students and exchange students just before the start of the academic year. In addition, events are held throughout the semester to help you integrate and enjoy moments of conviviality.

Welcome Week & Welcome Day

Before the start of your classes, ESN organizes a Welcome Week, a week full of activities and events to help you meet your classmates. This week concludes with the "Welcome Day", a large institutional day hosted by SASME, where you'll receive all the essential information about studying at Unil.

Erasmus Student Network

ESN, a student association for both international and local students at Unil, offers numerous events throughout the semester. Visits, excursions, weekend trips, and many other events are organized to help you discover the region and connect with other exchange and local students.

Balélec

Largest open-air music festival on a university campus in Europe, Balélec is held once a year on the EPFL campus during the spring semester. This festival attracts thousands of people for unforgettable concerts and festivities.

Buddy programme

The buddy programme is designed to support you during your first weeks in Lausanne. You will be paired with a Unil student volunteer ready to help you discover the city and the university.

Unilive Festival

Each year, at the end of the spring semester, the Unil campus hosts Unilive, a major music festival open to and organized by students.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"Unil has a lively, international campus with many activities and events, making it easy to connect and make new friends."

Sofia, LUISS, Rome, Italy

05

Live in Lausanne

Lausanne offers students a vibrant and well-connected environment, combining various and comfortable housing options and resources that make student life both enjoyable and practical.

Find your accommodation in Lausanne

To offer you affordable housing options, we work closely with the Fondation Maisons pour Étudiants Lausanne (FMEL), giving absolute priority to students on exchange from our non-European partner institutions.

In addition to FMEL housing, we provide a housing service to guide you in your search for accommodation in the Lausanne area. You will find information on various options beyond FMEL residences, including an online platform where you can browse listings for shared flats or rooms with private landlords.

KEY POINTS

4,500

students housed each year.

16

student residences
located close to the campus.



More
information
go.unil.ch/accommodation



Official student accommodations

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 01. ATRIUM | 10. RHODANIE |
| 02. AZUR | 11. SQUARE |
| 03. BOURDONNETTE | 12. TRIAUDES |
| 04. CÈDRES | 13. VORTEX |
| 05. FALAISES | 14. STÄHLI |
| 06. JORDILS | 15. PLANÈTE BLEUE |
| 07. MARCOLET | 16. CAMPUS SANTÉ |
| 08. OCHETTES | |
| 09. RAINBOW | |

Plan your monthly budget

Lausanne is known for its exceptional quality of life and the wide range of services available to its residents. As a student, you too will enjoy this welcoming, safe, and pleasant environment. Lausanne also offers modern infrastructure and a particularly rich cultural and social life.

To help you plan your stay, here is an overview of the main expenses to anticipate.

To obtain your student visa, you will need to demonstrate that you have a minimum amount of CHF 2,100 per month, essential to cover your expenses during your stay in Lausanne.

MAIN COSTS

Rent (without utilities)	700 – 900
Maintenance and food	850 – 900
Health & accident insurance	150 – 300
Books and equipment	100 – 150
TOTAL (CHF)	~ 2050

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

“Through the accommodation provided by the FMEL foundation, I met my closest friends. The staff are helpful, and the location is safe and close to both campus and the metro.”

Sristi, York University, Toronto, Canada



More
information
go.unil.ch/costofliving

06

Access our support services

At Unil, we offer a full range of services to support you throughout your exchange stay. Whether you need academic guidance, practical advice on health matters, or personal support, our team is here to help you make the most of your time on campus.



Support and resources

Health service

Offers a complete support structure, including medical advice, consultations with doctors and nurses, and psychotherapeutic consultations for tailored support related to both your studies and personal matters.



go.unil.ch/health

SASME

For guidance in preparing your exchange, as well as assistance with administrative and personal matters.



go.unil.ch/sasme-en

Faculties

For assistance with your course selection and enrolment, validation of your academic records, and answers to any academic-related questions.



go.unil.ch/contactin

Disability Support

To provide you with tailored assistance to meet your needs in cases of disability.



go.unil.ch/disability

Equality

For information on gender equality and equity policies at the university.



go.unil.ch/inclusion

IT Helpdesk

Available to assist and guide you with any IT questions or issues.



go.unil.ch/it-helpdesk

Campus Card

To help you navigate and use your campus ID card effectively.



go.unil.ch/campuscard-en

Lausanne and Romandie

Directly connected
to the rest of Europe



Stay connected with Unil



[sasme.unil](https://www.instagram.com/sasme.unil)
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[University of Lausanne](https://www.facebook.com/UniversityofLausanne)



studentmobility@unil.ch



go.unil.ch/incoming