

2024

Welcome Guide for

Switzerland



IAESTE
SWITZERLAND

Welcome Guide - SWITZERLAND

Dear student,

Congratulations! You have been accepted for an internship in Switzerland. To make your transition as smooth as possible, we have collected some information in this «Welcome Guide». Please read it carefully before you leave your country. If your question has not been answered, please get in touch with us. We are looking forward to meeting you soon in Switzerland!

The IAESTE Switzerland team



IAESTE Switzerland Premium Partners :

ETH
Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich



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IAESTE

IAESTE International

Imagine the time after 1945: World war II had left lots of grief and destruction. Large parts of the world were torn into pieces, but people hoped to build a better, more peaceful world. In this spirit, the United Nations and other international organizations were founded. In 1948, IAESTE was established to give students the chance to gain technical experience abroad and to promote international understanding and goodwill. Nowadays, IAESTE has over 80 member countries. Our international organization is officially called IAESTE A.s.b.l. and is based in Luxembourg.

IAESTE Switzerland

In Switzerland, we distinguish between the National Office (NO) in Zurich, a regional office in Lausanne and four Local Committees (LCs) in Basel, Bern, Lausanne and Zurich.

National Office (NO)

The NO is responsible for job raising, exchange of internships at the Annual Conference, the communication with IAESTE offices in other countries, and all the administrative work such as applying for your work/residency permit (if necessary) and coordination with employers and our volunteers in the local committees.

Lausanne regional office

Switzerland is divided into 4 major linguistic regions, to support the NO which is located in the German speaking area, IAESTE also has a regional office in the French-speaking region of the country. This office is based in Lausanne in the canton of Vaud. The other French speaking cantons are : Geneva, Neuchâtel, Jura, Fribourg and Valais (see point 2 for more information).

Local Committees (LCs)

The LCs organize activities which are a great way to make new friends and discover the country together. If you have found your internship on the IAESTE platform and the work offer says that the accommodation is arranged by IAESTE, they will also assist you with accommodation search and any other questions you might have.

Please remember that LC members work on a voluntary basis in their free time and that an organization is only as good as their members' commitment. You are more than welcome to offer them a hand, especially if you stay for longer. A thank you for their awesome work is welcome as well.



SWITZERLAND

Facts & figures

The origin of the Swiss Confederation goes back to the union of the three cantons of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden in central Switzerland in 1291. Today Switzerland is made up of 26 cantons. The political system is based on direct democracy and the principle of subsidiarity; we not only elect our parliament, but also decide on changes to the constitution and law.

Switzerland has a population of around 8.5 million and is situated in the heart of Europe, surrounded by Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Liechtenstein.

The Swiss Franc (CHF) is the official currency in Switzerland and Lichtenstein. Switzerland is not part of the European Union (EU), but there are many (bilateral) agreements for a close collaboration. Since 2008 Switzerland is part of the Schengen area (see Figure 1).

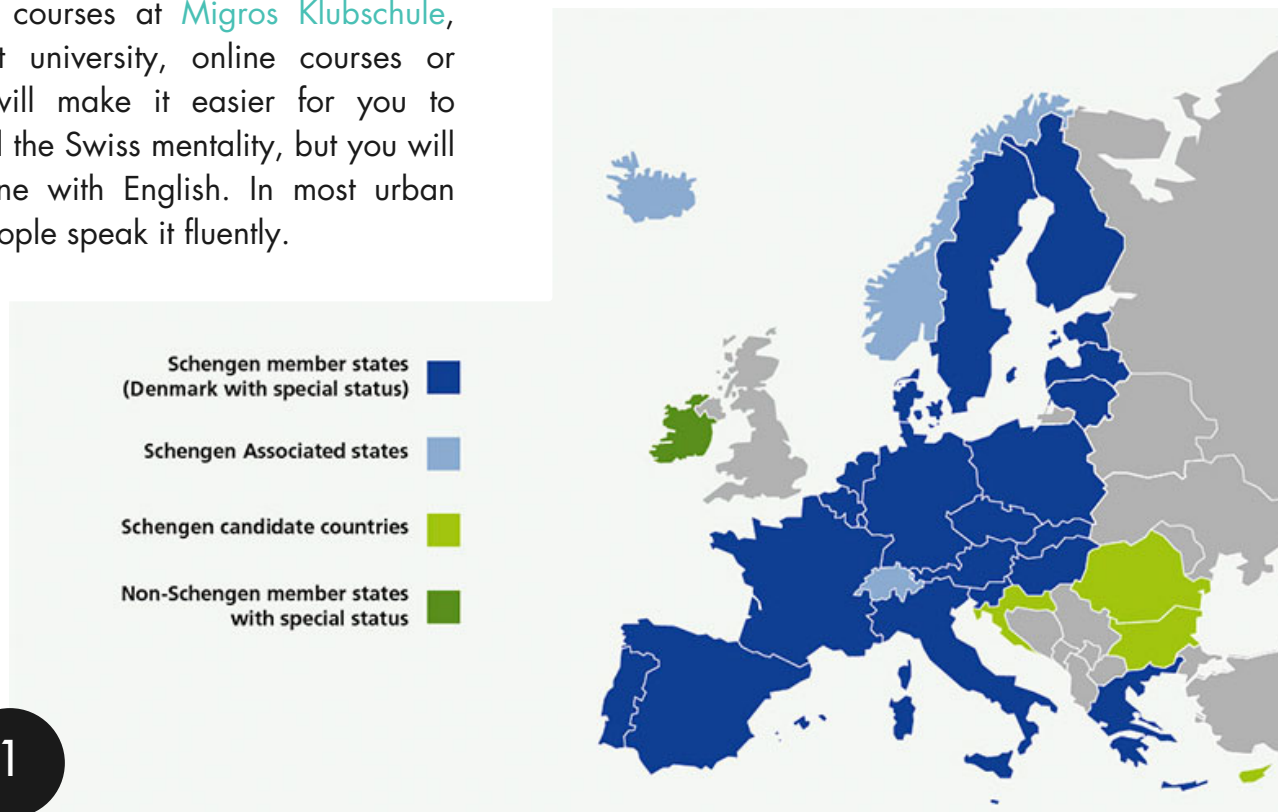
Switzerland has four seasons, with the following average temperatures: July & August 18 to 28 °C, January & February -2 to 7 °C, and with temperatures in between during transition times. Temperatures can be considerably cooler at higher altitudes and it can be rainy/snowy at times.

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There are four language regions in Switzerland: Swiss-German, French, Italian and Romansh. If you stay in the German speaking part of Switzerland, you will notice that the dialect spoken differs considerably from standard German (called "Hochdeutsch", eng. High German). High German is used as the written language in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. If you are interested in learning (Swiss) German, you could check languages courses at [Migros Klubschule](#), the closest university, online courses or apps. It will make it easier for you to understand the Swiss mentality, but you will also be fine with English. In most urban regions people speak it fluently.

Schengen area map

<https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/themen/einreise/einreise-ch-schengen.html>



"Traveling allows you to become so many different versions of yourself."



Internship timeline

6-8
weeks
before
internship

Get in contact with your tutor + start accommodation search + make travel arrangements to Switzerland

*IAESTE will submit the request for your VISA (we advise NOT to make travel plans until you receive your visa, or ensure you can change your travel dates without cost)

1-2
weeks
before
internship

Upload arrival details to the EP (Exchange Platform)

*As soon as you receive the visa authorization letter from IAESTE, contact the Swiss representation in your country to enquire about the visa pick up process + arrange travel to Switzerland and upload arrival details to the EP (ref. p. 09 for full visa procedure)

1 week
before
internship

Get your health insurance for Switzerland (see p. 12 for details).
Subscribe to the IAESTE mailing list and our social media channels to stay updated about our activities and latest news.

upon
arrival

If required, register with local authorities (see p. 09) - should be done ideally before 1st day of work.

Open a bank account + buy a local SIM card + get travel pass

during
internship

Remember you are an ambassador for IAESTE and with your good performance, it is more likely that other students also will get the chance to intern with your company.

Take lots of photos or videos to share your experience - we always look forward to hearing about your stories :)

end of
internship

Check the departure checklist (p. 28) and tell everyone how awesome your IAESTE internship was!

*These items in light blue are only for students who do not have EU/EFTA nationality

Before departure

All the internship preparations you should consider

In this section of our Welcome Guide, we will present the major points to think about in preparation for your stay in Switzerland. This can be a lot of information to take in, but don't worry, your tutor and the IAESTE Switzerland National Office team are always at your disposal should anything be unclear or if you have additional questions.

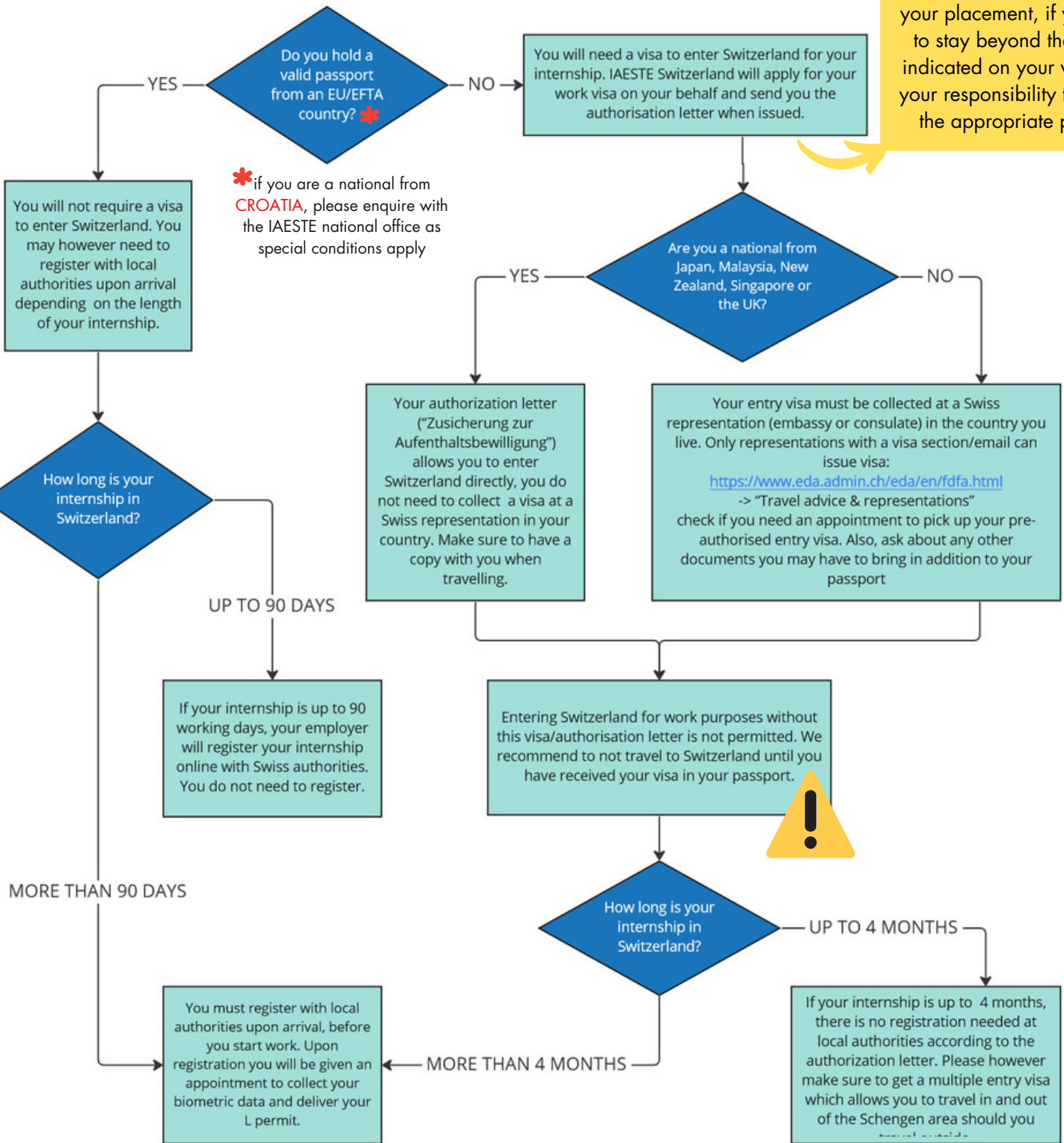


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VISA and work permit

First and foremost, make sure that your passport is valid long enough (or your ID card for EU/EFTA citizens who plan to travel with it), in general at least three months after the end of your internship. Now, determine what type of permit you will need and the process to obtain it by following the below flowchart :

It may take 4-6 weeks for authorities to make a visa decision once your visa request has been submitted. We recommend that you **DO NOT** make travel arrangements (book your flight for example) until you have received your visa. IAESTE Switzerland is not responsible for any costs resulting from delayed or refused visas. IAESTE Switzerland will apply for a permit for the duration of your placement, if you wish to stay beyond the dates indicated on your visa, it is your responsibility to obtain the appropriate permit.



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Accommodation, Pick up and Tutoring

For IAESTE members (IAESTE interns)

If you found your internship on the IAESTE exchange platform, you can find who is taking care of your accommodation on the offer and follow the relevant instructions below. If you have found your internship by yourself and IAESTE is only in charge of visa service, please jump to the next page.

Who is in charge of your accommodation? please check on your IAESTE offer or with your IAESTE contact:

IAESTE: A tutor will help you find accommodation and assist you with any other questions you might have. Please discuss with them if they can pick you up at the airport or where else you will meet to go to your accommodation. If you cannot meet your tutor at the agreed time (e.g. flight delay, missed train, traffic jam) or in case of other problems, make sure to inform them as soon as possible. If you have not heard from your tutor 3-4 weeks before your internship starts, please get in touch with the IAESTE National Office in Zurich: incoming@iaeste.ch

Employer: Please arrange accommodation directly with your employer and check if someone from the company can pick you up at the airport/station. If you have to find your way to your accommodation or the company by yourself, ask for directions and a contact number in case of problems. Arrange a time and a meeting place with the person who will give you the keys for your accommodation. If you cannot arrive at the agreed time (e.g. flight delay, missed train, traffic jam) or in case of other problems, make sure to inform your employer and/or landlord as soon as possible.

You: Please find links for websites on the next page. Feel free to also post in our Whatsapp group (ask National Office for access) or [Facebook group](#). Fellow interns will be happy to help you with tips and might know about any options. Also, it might be a good idea to place a search advertisement on websites. If you have a temporary accommodation contract and might want to change accommodation later on during your internship, check your contract carefully about the conditions of resigning from it. In general, temporary accommodation contracts cannot be terminated earlier unless your landlord agrees (e.g. by finding a suitable new tenant). If you cannot count on their goodwill, you will have to pay the rent until the end of your lease.

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For non-IAESTE members (visa service students)

IAESTE unfortunately does not provide accommodation service if you did not arrange your internship through IAESTE. We are happy however to provide you with the following tips for your accommodation search: We advise to start your search well in advance since it can be difficult to find accommodation. Check with your employer if they can arrange accommodation or have any tips for you (i.e. company houses, student houses). Most young people in Switzerland live in shared apartments with shared kitchen and bathroom(s).

The most commonly used websites to find accommodation in Switzerland are flatfox.ch, wgzimmer.ch, ronorp.net, or students.ch (only in French and German).

Other options worth checking:

Zurich: [Housing office of University/ETH Zurich](#)

Basel: [Platform of University Basel](#)

Bern: [studentlodge.ch](#)

CAREFUL!

Be aware that there are many suspicious offers online. So be careful, for example when you are asked to pay money in advance or into a bank account abroad. Make sure to have a signed contract first as well as check if the property exists and corresponds to the pictures

Insurances and Taxes

Health Insurance

Health insurance by a Swiss insurer is compulsory for everyone living/residing in Switzerland. Since the hospital and doctor costs in Switzerland are very high, it is important that you are sufficiently insured.

For short internships (EU/EFTA < 3 months, non-EU/EFTA < 4 months), you could ask your insurance provider at home to fill in a Swiss government form confirming that you are sufficiently covered for your stay in Switzerland. Based on our experience however, foreign insurances will rarely do so and most often their coverage is not sufficient to cover the high costs of Swiss health services.



Furthermore, the EHIC (European Health Insurance Card) is not accepted in Switzerland for students who earn an income (paid internships for example). We therefore highly advise to apply for coverage with a Swiss insurance provider.

We recommend taking out insurance from Swisscare, you can subscribe using this form:

Swisscare insurance form

You can subscribe prior to your arrival in Switzerland or within your two first weeks in the country. When completing the form, you must:

- 1 Indicate the start date for the insurance this must correspond to your arrival date or at the latest your registration date in Switzerland.
- 2 Choose a deductible, this is the amount paid by the policy holder (you) before your insurance provider will cover the costs. We recommend choosing a low deductible (CHF 300) so that you don't have to pay much if something happens during your time in Switzerland.



When completing your personal information on the Swisscare form, if you are interning in the cantons of Basel/Stadt&Land, Glarus, Appenzell, Aargau or Neuchâtel, you will receive a popup message informing you are not eligible for the student insurance plan and giving you a link to a KVG form, please select this option and fill the form.

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if you cannot subscribe with Swisscare and your internship is longer than 3-4 months, you can ask for a premium reduction ("Prämienverbilligung" in German, "réduction de prime" in French). You will have to fill in an application form so that authorities can check if you are eligible for reduced insurance rates.

ATTENTION !

Neither IAESTE nor the employer can be held liable for costs arising from insufficient insurance coverage. Dentist costs are not covered by health insurance in Switzerland. If you have to go to the dentist, we recommend asking for a quotation first and have a checkup before you leave to Switzerland.

Social security, accident insurance and income tax

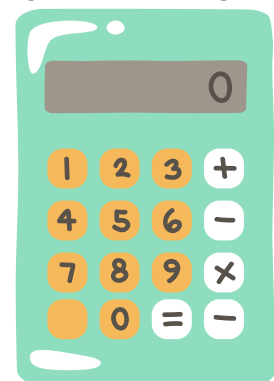
Social security and accident insurance as well as a small income tax ("Quellensteuer" / "Impôt anticipé") are deducted directly from your salary. The standard deductions are:

- AHV / AVS: Old-age and survivors' insurance
- IV / AI: Disability insurance
- BVG / LPP: Pension fund (if you earn more than 21'150 CHF in a year)
- UVG / LAA: Accident insurance

Employees whose weekly working time exceeds 8 hours are insured against occupational accidents, occupational diseases and non-occupational accidents (accidents outside working hours) by their employer. You will not have to include this point in your personal health insurance.

If you have interned in Switzerland for one year or longer, you can apply to reclaim your AHV / AVS social security scheme payments. Details and procedures can be found [here](#) and your company HR can assist you with this also.

[Click here to calculate your net salary:](#)



Personal liability insurance

We strongly recommend an insurance for any damages which you might cause accidentally, e.g. breaking a window in your accommodation, when you run into a person with your bike, etc. Please keep in mind that such incidents can become very expensive. Our insurance broker RVA can offer you a good deal, which takes into account that you are an (IAESTE) intern.

RVA Versicherungsbroker AG
Talgut Zentrum 5,3063 Ittigen
T: +41 31 917 50 59
E: info@rva-ag.com
W: www.rva-ag.com



Travel arrangements

There are 3 international airports in Switzerland: Zurich, Geneva and Basel-Mulhouse. Please check which one is closest to the place where you are going to stay. If you are unsure, please check with your tutor, your company or the National Office. For shorter distances, it might be (ecologically and financially) worthwhile checking the train and bus connections. It will probably be cheaper to buy a return ticket in your own country than buying the in- and outbound tickets separately.

IMPORTANT: Before you leave your country, please make sure that you know where you are going to stay, how you are getting there and emergency contacts if needed (e.g. National Office). If you found your internship on the IAESTE exchange platform, please enter your arrival information in your EP account so that the National Office is informed about your arrival. Please also inform your company and tutor (if applicable).

This occasion is also a good opportunity to discuss the first day at work with your employer (when and where to be). Remember that 1st May and 1st August are in most cantons a national holiday.

COVID

Please carefully read the current entry rules and check if your country is on the Swiss quarantine list. If you are unsure, contact the IAESTE Switzerland National Office which monitors the situation closely.

We advise to check new requirements regularly by referring to the advice of the [Swiss Federal Office of Public Health](#).

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Money

Your salary will be enough to cover your basic costs of living such as rent, (health) insurance, mobile plan, groceries and travel passes to go to/from work. In Switzerland, you have to pay the rent in advance at the beginning of each month. At the same time, you will probably also have to pay a security deposit (usually 1-2 months' rent). The salary is however only paid at the end of the month. Therefore, please make sure that you have access to enough money (cash, credit card or bank account) until you receive your first pay.

Swiss ATMs are called «Bancomat». Most of them accept foreign Maestro and credit cards (e.g. MasterCard, Visa, American Express). However, be aware that a commission fee may be charged at each withdrawal! Ask the bank which issued the card about cash withdrawal fees abroad.

If you need to exchange currencies, you can do so at the airport, most train stations with counters or banks. Banks might charge you extra money if you do not have an account with them. There is no restriction of the amount of money you can bring into Switzerland. However, for amounts higher than 10'000 CHF information has to be given at customs on the beneficial owner, on the origin and the intended use of the funds.

If, for any reason, you do not have enough money at the beginning of your stay, ask your company if they can give you an advance payment. You can also get in touch with the National Office in Zurich if you are in financial problems.

Electricity

The electrical current in Switzerland is 230V, 50Hz. Swiss sockets are sometimes recessed, three-holed, hexagonally shaped and incompatible with many plugs from abroad. They usually, however, take the standard European two-pronged plugs.

Do remember to bring an adaptor for your devices if needed.



Stay Up-to-date

Mailing list



information about events and weekly meetings organized by the LCs, and other official announcements. [Register here](#)

Facebook Group



For unofficial announcements, introductions, social contacts and topics with no relation to IAESTE, please use this group. [Join here](#)

Whatsapp Groups



probably the best way to keep up with IAESTE social life and ask questions. Ask your tutor or the closest local committee to be added.

Packing

Checklist

Don't forget to bring the following items for your internship in Switzerland (non-exhaustive list):

- Passport (or ID card for EU/EFTA citizens), visa and authorisation letter if applicable

- Travel documents, e.g. flight ticket, vaccination certificate if required, etc

- IAESTE papers incl. work contract if you already have it

- Passport photos (required e.g. for train passes)

- Enough money to cover expenses before you receive your first salary at the end of the month

- Adaptor for your electrical equipment (230 V / 3-pronged plug)

- Copy of (Health) insurance policies

- Directions to get to your accommodation

- Contacts of tutor, landlord, employer, National Office (e.g. for delays or problems)

- Special medication if necessary (or ask your doctor if they are available in Switzerland)

- International student identity card (for discounts)

- Documents for registration in Switzerland (if applicable, see [p. 19](#))

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Upon arrival

Public Transport

Public transportation is very good in Switzerland. You can reach most places by train, bus, tram or boat and you have frequent connections to most places. If you plan to use public transportation frequently (e.g. if you go to work or join our weekend activities), it will be worth checking a frequent travel pass since you can save quite a bit of money. Here are the most common ones:



Half Fare Travelcard

You can travel for a reduced price on all SBB train connections, which is the national railway company. It also includes reductions on most other railways as well as on boats, buses and trams. Sometimes you also get discounts on urban transport as well as reduced-price [RailAway](#) combined offers for leisure activities, e.g. train ticket and ski pass or entry to a zoo/museum.

The Half Fare Travelcard costs CHF 185 for one year (CHF 120 for young people under 25 years). You can buy it upon arrival at the ticket office in the airport or railway station. Please have your passport and a passport photo ready. More information can be found [here](#).

Night GA Travelcard

If you are younger than 25 years old and enjoy travelling in the evening, you might want to consider getting the Night GA Travelcard. It allows you to travel for free in 2nd class from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m. on SBB trains and those of most other swiss railways, as well as on much of the public transport in Switzerland. Please keep in mind that some trains and buses at night require a night supplement, which is not included and you have to get separately. You can buy the [Night GA Travelcard](#) online for one year (CHF 99).

Monthly and yearly tickets

If you often travel on the same route or within the same area, you can check the [point-to-point Travelcard](#) (for trains across fare networks) or the [regional travelcards](#) (within the same fare network). There are monthly and yearly tickets available. Check for special rates for young people (e.g. under 25 years).

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Registration with local authorities

Do I need to register?

Please refer to the graph on [page 09](#) to determine whether you are required to register or not. Usually, you need to register:

- If you are EU/EFTA national and you are staying more than 3 months
- If you are a non EU/EFTA national and you are staying more than 4 months

Procedure

If you are required to register, you must do so before your 1st day of work (or within the 1st/2nd day at the latest).

1. Please go to the town hall of the city/commune you live in or wherever the local administration offices is situated (usually called "Einwohnerkontrolle", "Einwohnerdienste " or "Contrôles des habitants" in French). Please note that in some cantons you are required to make an appointment ahead of time, this will be indicated along with your visa authorisation letter if it is the case.
2. When you are in touch with authorities, always mention that you are an IAESTE intern ("Praktikant" in German or "stagiaire" in French). You will need to present the required documents (see list below) in order for them to issue your L-permit (short-term residence permit). For non-EU/EFTA students, following your registration, you will be given an appointment at migration office to register your biometric data in order to receive your L-permit. This appointment is often held in a separate location on a later date.

Please note that the registration fee is approximately 150 CHF. Your L-permit is usually delivered within 2-3 weeks after your registration (or after biometric data registration for non-EU/EFTA nationals).



Please check upon registration that the dates of the L-permit are issued correctly. It should refer to your internship start and end dates (and NOT your entry date to Switzerland).

Required documents for registration

Please bring with you:

- Work contract
- Accommodation contract
- Passport and a passport photo
- Authorization letter (visa)
- Some offices require a certificate of birth (so maybe make sure to know before you leave where you could get it if required)
- Home address in Switzerland (please always mention "C/O & name of person mentioned on the letterbox" - unless you will be added too - otherwise you will not receive the mail)
- Registration fee of around 100 - 150 CHF

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Bank account

You will probably need a Swiss bank account since your salary usually cannot be paid in cash and payments on foreign bank accounts are not allowed. Exceptions are made sometimes for short internships (3/4 months).

To open an account, you generally need your passport, a document proving your employment in Switzerland (contract) and a confirmation that you have registered in Switzerland (plus your authorization letter). If you have proof that you are a student, you might get special rates.

Different banks have different conditions, so compare and think in advance about which services you need, e.g. Maestro card to withdraw money/pay in shops or e-banking to pay your bills. A prepaid credit card might be also useful for payments, e.g. [the ok.-Prepaid VISA MasterCard](#).

You might also want to have a look at [TWINT](#), which can be used to send and request money or make payments easily within Switzerland.

Local SIM card

If you are staying less than 4 months, you can only get a prepaid plan, for longer placements there are several providers in Switzerland. If you are a light user, we recommend to get a prepaid SIM card which you can recharge when needed. You will not have any monthly fix costs (e.g. Migros «M-Budget» and Coop «Prix Garantie»). If you use your phone often (calling and data), probably a plan will be the better option for you. Please check the minimum running time of the plan to know when you can cancel it. Often, providers have special offers for young people.

Comparison of mobile phone tariffs: <https://en.comparis.ch/telecom/mobile>

A good way to keep in touch with family and friends abroad is to use video calls, e.g. Skype, WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger. If you have Wifi in your accommodation, you might need less data to pay for it. At most train stations, or cafes/restaurants there is Wifi as well.



In Switzerland



Employment conditions

Most people in Switzerland work 40 to 42.5 hours per week if they have a 100% job (which means you are working 5 days a week, Monday to Friday). The minimum holidays required by law are 20 days per year. Public holidays differ from canton to canton. [Here](#) is an overview.

Under Swiss law a temporary work contract cannot be terminated early (without financial consequences) unless the contract says something different or by mutual agreement. Please keep in mind that the employer has given you this chance of working abroad and counts on your contribution. If there are any problems, we recommend talking to your supervisor, any other person in the company you are close with or the National Office to see how we can find a solution. Take it as a chance to practice your communication skills.

If you are ill, it is important that you immediately notify the employer. Please check with them when you need to submit a medical certificate which confirms that you cannot work. You will continue to receive your salary.

Moving

If you change accommodation, please inform the IAESTE National Office and your company about your new address (also your tutor if applicable). In order to get your bond back, you will have to leave your accommodation clean and in the same condition as you rented it.



In case you registered in Switzerland with local authorities (internship longer than 3-4 months) and you move to another village or another city district (e.g. another "Kreis" in Zurich) you will have to unregister and register again at the new local municipality or "Kreisbüro" (or possibly online). They will charge you again a registration fee.

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Getting Around - in Switzerland

Public Transport

Travelling in Switzerland by public transport is easy due to its extensive network. For timetables and to buy tickets you can use www.sbb.ch or the SBB Mobile App ([Android](#) or [iPhone](#)). If you plan your trip in advance, you might find a supersaver ticket (which will be only valid on the specific train you select) or a [Saver Day Pass](#) (which allows you to travel for a day on all routes in the GA area).



In general, you need a valid ticket before boarding. Sometimes you can buy the ticket at the bus driver if there was no other option, such as a ticket machine. For bikes you need an extra [bike ticket](#). You will be fined at least 100 CHF if you are caught without a valid ticket.

Most municipalities have a limited amount of Swiss Travel Passes per day, which have the same validity as a GA. They usually cost 40 - 55 CHF and can be used without a Half Fare Travelcard. Check with your municipality early since they are sold out quickly. You can check the availability [here](#). In the city of Zurich, there are no such tickets available anymore.

[RailAway](#) offers attractive packages for train and entrance tickets or ski passes to various destinations.

Bike

Switzerland has many biking trails. You can get information about where to rent a bike at the travel information centres located in larger railway stations. We suggest downloading the [Switzerland Mobility](#) app for maps.



More and more cities have an (E-) bike/scooter short distance rental sharing system, often organised through an app.

Car

In Switzerland, you need for motorways a sticker (Vignette, CHF 40, now also possible to buy online an [E-Vignette](#)), which you place at the front window. When you park your car, check if you have to pay for the parking to avoid a fine (parking in Switzerland is limited, please ensure you rent a spot or have easy access to parking where you live). Other good-to-know facts:



- Minimum age for car rentals: 18 to 25 (varies by company)
- Headlights must be on even during the day
- Blood alcohol limit: 0.5 ‰ (3dl of beer, better to not drink at all)
- If you consider car sharing: www.mobility.ch

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Getting Around - international travel

You can travel easily to other European countries by train or bus. For the train, there often are saver tickets available if you are early and some tickets are cheaper if you are younger than 26: www.bahn.de (Germany), www.oebb.at (Austria), www.sncf.fr (France), www.trenitalia.it (Italy)

Prices for bus tickets might depend on the demand. Flixbus has many connections, e.g. to Munich: <https://global.flixbus.com/>

If you travel abroad, do not forget your L-Permit and/or your passport with your multiple entry visa!



EMERGENCY NUMBERS IN SWITZERLAND

- 117 Police
- 118 Fire department
- 144 Ambulance, emergency
- 1414 Rega (helicopter rescue in mountains)



Please only contact emergency departments at hospitals ("Notfallstationen" / "Urgences") in case of serious accidents or health issues which have to be treated immediately. For any other issues, there are other medical stations in bigger Swiss cities:

Zürich: www.permanence.ch

Basel: www.medix-toujours.ch

Bern: www.localmed.ch

Lausanne: www.pmu-lausanne.ch

IF you need to reach out to IAESTE Switzerland, either contact your personal tutor or check on the IAESTE exchange platform (EP) under [contact list Switzerland](#) the emergency mobile number.

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Shopping

Most shops in Switzerland are open Monday to Saturday until 6.30pm (in bigger cities until 8 or 9pm). In bigger cities, after hour shopping (also Sundays) is possible at railway stations or airports. Debit and Credit cards are widely accepted. In some, especially smaller shops you can use credit cards only above a certain amount (e.g. 10 CHF). Please check.

Waste disposal

In most Swiss cities garbage collection is financed with a special tax on garbage bags (e.g. «Zürisack» in Zurich, «Bebbisack» in Basel or «sacs taxés » in Lausanne). Other garbage bags will not be collected. You get the special bags in supermarkets such as Migros or Coop at the cash desk. They are collected on a specific day of the week depending on the location. Ask your landlord about dates and where you can leave the bags.

Swiss are champions in recycling, and it would be great if you could also help us save resources. You can find collecting points in each neighbourhood or in supermarkets for the following materials: PET bottles, aluminium cans, glass bottles, metal, cardboard, paper, batteries and sometimes compost/organic material.

Leisure time

For suggestions what to do in your free time, ask your colleagues at work, the IAESTE Local Committee (LC) or other interns. The LCs regularly organize events and activities, especially during the warmer months (see [IAESTE Events here](#)). If you want to organize excursions by yourself, you can find inspiration on www.myswitzerland.com or in tourist offices and bookstores.

You probably want to do some hiking or even climbing. For this purpose, it is advisable to join local people who know the places and its specific conditions. If you go on your own, you should plan ahead, have a [map](#) with you (or the App SchweizMobil), stick to the trail marking and tell your flatmates/landlord/employer where you are going and when you expect to be back. Please keep in mind that the weather can dramatically change within a short time, especially if you are in the Alps. It is always good to have a sweater and a raincoat with you and enough water.

In case you regularly go to the mountains for hikes, you should consider becoming a member of Rega (40 CHF/year). It will be helpful if you get into problems and have to be rescued by helicopter.

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For concert tickets, check www.ticketcorner.ch and www.starticket.ch; for parties in the Zurich area www.usgang.ch.

Tip: Cinemas are often cheaper on Mondays. Always check for student discounts as well.

If you want to eat in a restaurant, you will have to spend at least 15-20 CHF for lunch (the daily menu is usually the cheapest option). In the evening, meals are more expensive. A main course and a beer can cost easily 30 CHF or more. Service charge is included, but it is common to give a tip (5% more or less) in good restaurants and in the evening if you had a good service.

Universities offer good sports facilities, which are often open during holidays as well. Ask for the program and conditions. Students from foreign universities can get an [ASVZ membership](#) in Zurich for 425 CHF per year with several training facilities throughout the city and even in Winterthur and Wädenswil. Larger companies sometimes have their own sports clubs.

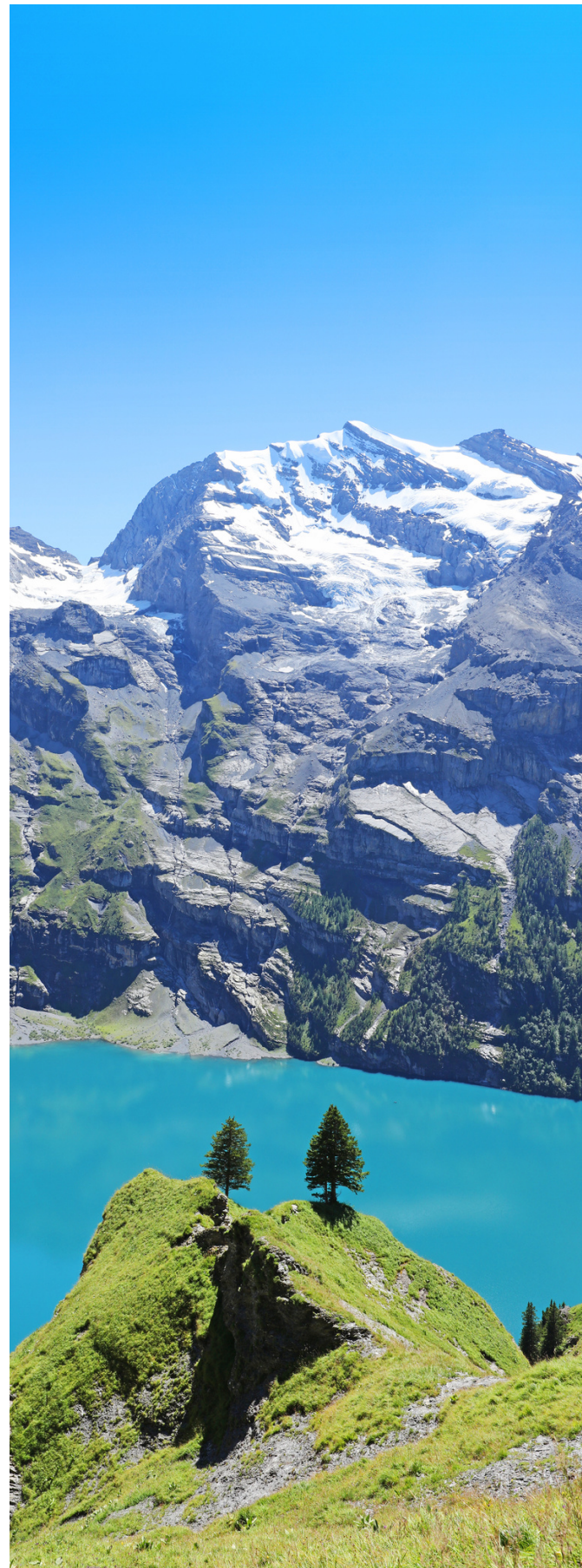
Tip: Running and biking are a good way to explore your neighbourhood and probably the cheapest options to do sports in Switzerland. In summer, you can also go swimming in the lake or river. Check with locals and only go into the water at safe spots and if you are a good swimmer. Especially rivers can be unpredictable with currents.

Language schools: If you wanted to practise your German or French skills, you can check at [Migros Klubschule](#) or the local university for courses.

Often recommended is also [Online Sprachkurse | Sprachen lernen mit Erfolg | Lingoda](#)

Where they have online classes in small groups 24/7. 7 day free trial.

Some companies will support you also financially, please double-check.



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IAESTE Events

An IAESTE internship is not only about gaining practical experience, but also about discovering your host country and meeting new people. If you want to stay up to date about IAESTE events, please sign up to the [trainee mailing list](#).



Weekly Meetings

Weekly Meetings are organized in Zurich, Lausanne, Basel and Bern. Please check with the local committee (LC) about their schedule. Contact details can be found [here](#).

Zurich

Weekly Meetings in Zurich usually take place on Thursdays and are announced by a member of LC Zurich on your official mailing list.

Basel, Bern and Lausanne

In Basel, Bern and Lausanne, there are no fixed weekly meetings due to the smaller number of interns in these regions. For more details about their meet-ups, get in touch with them (and to be part of their WhatsApp groups).

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Weekend Activities

Also over the weekend, IAESTE organizes events for interns to get to know each other and discover the many beautiful places in Switzerland. Some of the highlights are: Chocolate and Cheese Weekend, Zermatt Weekend, Ticino Weekend, River Rafting, Ski weekend, and many more...

You can find the detailed programme here: <https://www.iaeste.ch/en/social-activities>

The page will be updated frequently during the year. Since the number of participants is usually limited and our events are very popular, each event requires registration on a "first come, first served" basis. IAESTE interns get a priority for the first 48h of registration.

Changes to the event program, opening of registration and other details will be announced on our trainee mailing list, so we strongly recommend subscribing to this list if you want to be informed about our activities early enough.

IAESTE Merchandise

Make sure you get your souvenir of IAESTE Switzerland before you leave! Our T-shirts are known to be one of the best IAESTE shirts on the planet with their classy look and fine material. Also our Swiss army knife with the IAESTE logo makes the perfect souvenir: www.iaeste.ch/local-committees/shop/

Get in touch with your LC so that they can bring you the souvenir directly to the next meeting.



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Departure

Before you leave Switzerland, please remember to:

- Unregister from local authorities where you live. You have to leave your future address with them. Please do so no later than one week before your date of departure. You will need the notice of departure document for various contract terminations (e.g. health insurance, train ticket).
- Terminate your health insurance with the confirmation which you receive upon unregistration. Non-EU/EFTA nationals with an internship between 3 and 4 months can terminate their Swisscare insurance with their authorization letter (visa).
- Terminate all other insurances, such as liability insurance and other contracts where applicable
- Close your bank account and advise them where to transfer the money to or collect it in cash. Leave them your new address to receive a final revision at the end of the year.
- Terminate your mobile plan if applicable.
- Schedule a meeting with your supervisor to discuss your performance. In Switzerland, it is customary to receive a "confirmation of work" for short internships up to 4 months (listing your tasks and responsibilities). If you stayed longer than 4 months, you can ask for a "certificate of employment", which is a little more detailed and also includes the employer's assessment of your performance. It can be useful for future job applications.
- Hand over your accommodation to your landlord. Please leave it in the same condition as you rented it. Swiss standards regarding cleanliness are high.
- Tell everyone how awesome your IAESTE internship was by completing your EP trainee report. And don't forget to tag IAESTE Switzerland on social media so that we can reshare the best stories.

If you decide to stay longer in Switzerland after your internship (applies for EU/EFTA passport holders and non-EU/EFTA citizens who are allowed to travel without a visa to Switzerland for tourist purposes and up to 90 days), please ensure that you are covered for illness and accidents during that time. In general, your accident insurance from work covers an additional 30 days after you have finished your internship.

Please let us know how we can make the Welcome Guide even better next year. Any suggestions and tips can be sent to incoming@iaeste.ch

"TIME TO SAY GOODBYE"

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**We wish you a great
internship!**

