

Welcome!

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Geneva Tsinghua Initiative Visitor's guide



**UNIVERSITÉ
DE GENÈVE**



**GENEVA
TSINGHUA
INITIATIVE**



清華大學
Tsinghua University

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Geneva Tsinghua Initiative

Campus Biotech Innovation Park

Avenue de Secheron 15

1202 Geneva - Switzerland

<https://gt-initiative.org>

info@gt-initiative.org

Introduction

The University of Geneva (UNIGE) has been partnering with Tsinghua University (THU) on a highly interdisciplinary education program for the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals), that includes summer schools, a Master's degree (single and dual degree options), innovation exchange bootcamps and hackathons for the SDGs, among others. This guide is meant to help prospective participants in GTI activities to prepare for coming to Geneva, whether it is for a few days, a few months or a few years.

The GTI's innovative education programs address the SDGs in a practical, hands-on way. They involve students and professionals who spend part of their time in Geneva, working directly with the International Organizations present there, and part in Beijing and Shenzhen, two of China's most dynamic and entrepreneurial environments.



Arriving in Geneva

Useful tip: if arriving by plane, you can pick up a **free ticket** for public transport from the machine in the baggage collection area at the Arrival level. This ticket, offered by Geneva Airport, allows you to use any form of public transport in Geneva for a period of 80 minutes.

Visa

Depending on your nationality, you may need a visa to enter Switzerland. Since it can take up to three months to obtain a visa, make sure you start the application process well in advance, especially for the Summer school. On the other hand, long-term students' applications are usually processed with priority and if the application documents you submit are complete, the process should not take much more than a month.

1. Consult the [website of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs](#) to enquire as to whether you need a visa or not. If you have several nationalities, verify the conditions for each nationality as one of them may permit you to enter Switzerland without a visa.
2. Upon reception of the letter of acceptance, Master students must apply for a “ National visa for a stay of more than 90 days ” at the Swiss embassy in your country/region. Summer School students or other short-term visitors must apply for a “ Schengen visa for a stay of up to 90 days ”
3. Cost: enquire at the Swiss Embassy of your country/region

More info here:

https://www.swiss-visa.ch/register/i210_select_country_view.action

<http://www.unige.ch/international/en/incoming/international-non-erasmus-students/todolist/visa-and-residence-permit-guidelines/>

<https://www.unige.ch/genevasummerschools/practical-information/visa>

Residence permit

In Switzerland, a residence permit is compulsory for any stay over 3 months. B permits are granted first, either for studies, paid work or family reunion. Upon arrival, you must apply for your permit at the Cantonal Office for Population and Migration (OCPM), at a cost of about CHF 250 for student B permits. The procedure is different if you are an EU/EFTA citizen or not, please find more info here:

<https://www.ge.ch/demander-permis-sejour-etudiant>

<https://www.ge.ch/en/welcome-geneva>

IMPORTANT: Non EU/EFTA (extra-european) students are not allowed to work for the first 6 months of their stay, so make sure you have enough financial resources to cover that period. EU/EFTA can work from the beginning. Cantonal migration and labour laws strictly regulate non-Swiss students, who can only work up to 15 hours/week during academic periods and up to 100% (40 hours/week) during holidays/breaks. Furthermore, all jobs, including unpaid internships, must be announced to the OCPM, who will either issue a special authorization (in the case of internships required by the curriculum) or modify the B permit to allow professional activity.

Health and accident insurance

Medical and pharmaceutical costs are high in Switzerland, and health insurance is **compulsory for all residents**. You must purchase medical and accident insurance upon your arrival.

1. International students are eligible for reduced-price health insurance starting from CHF 64 per month. Be aware however that a deductible amount applies to every insurance scheme, which means you will have to cover all expenses up to the amount of said deductible. E.g. the option costing CHF 64 per month includes a deductible of CHF 1500. Therefore, think carefully about the option you choose; it might be advantageous to pay a slightly higher premium but have a smaller deductible. Please also note that only 90% of costs are refunded by the insurance, you must cover the remaining 10%.

You can find all the details on the ScoreStudies' website:

<http://www.scorestudies.ch/en/nos-solutions/essentials/>

You are of course free to choose any other health and accident insurance provider.

2. If you already have private insurance, you can request its recognition with the form “[Formulaire de contrôle de l'équivalence de l'Assurance Maladie](#)” (FR) - “[Check form for the equivalence of Swiss health insurance 2019](#)” (EN). Ideally, this should be done before your arrival in Switzerland. Your insurance must match the minimal coverage required in Switzerland.

3. European students are covered by their national insurance. Do not forget to bring your European Insurance Card.

Details here:

<http://www.unige.ch/international/en/incoming/international-non-erasmus-students/todolist/health-and-accident-insurance-guidelines/>

Accommodation

It can be very difficult to find reasonably-priced accommodation in Geneva, so make sure you start your inquiries as early as possible. Accommodation for Summer school students is typically included in the package. Master's students **must apply for UNIGE-managed accommodation as soon as their registration is being processed**, with the provided OSIRIS access codes. You should also use social media and any contacts you may have in Geneva. Some current students who will spend next year or semester abroad may be able to swap their accommodation with you. A dedicated WeChat group is set up for each GTI program, which can be useful in this instance. If you are looking for accommodation close to the University of Geneva, please note that the main buildings where you will have classes are: 1) Uni Mail, Boulevard du Pont d'Arve 40; 2) Campus Biotech Innovation Park, Avenue de Sécheron 15 (see map links below).

UNIGE student residences: <https://www.unige.ch/batiment/service-batiments/logements/en/>

Other student residences (only in French):

<http://website.cite-uni-geneve.ch/en/nos-hebergements/autres-solutions-a-geneve/>

La Ciguë, cheap, cooperative student housing: <https://cigue.ch/the-cigue-presented/>

<https://www.unige.ch/genevasummerschools/practical-information/accommodation>

Budget

Plan your budget carefully to ensure you have sufficient financial resources for your stay.

Budget for long-term students (Master's program)

| Items | Amount / month |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Study costs | CHF 100 |
| Health and accident insurance | Free with European Health Insurance Card Starting from CHF 64.- without European Health Insurance Card |
| RC liability insurance | CHF 80 per year |
| Transportation | CHF 45/CHF 75 (over 25 years old) |
| Rent | CHF 700.- (average) |
| Electricity / telephone | CHF 130.- |
| Food | CHF 600.- |
| Clothes / cultural activities / leisure | CHF 250.- |
| TOTAL | Approx. CHF 2000.- |

Budget for short-term students (Summer School program)

<https://www.unige.ch/genevasummerschools/practical-information/staying-geneva>

Life in Geneva

Transportation

Geneva has a very good public transportation system that will quickly and conveniently get you to any corner of the city. The Geneva Public Transportation network is named UNIRESO. It is an interconnected system of trams, buses (TPG), mouettes (yellow transport boats) and trains that covers the city of Geneva, the Canton of Geneva, and parts of neighbouring Canton of Vaud and France. There are different zones; zone 10 covers "all Geneva" (City and Canton, including some local train rides). All information on www.tpg.ch

Public Transportation (UNIRESO)

Unireso Pass:

For long stays, it is worth purchasing a 1-month or 1-year zone 10 TPG/Unireso pass. You can buy them at the TPG Office inside Gare Cornavin (office located in the northern entrance, upper part of the station), or online. You will need to provide your ID and your address in Geneva.

Single transportation tickets:

The single UNIRESO ticket is valid for buses, trams, lake boats and local trains (including Cornavin-Airport train) within a given Unireso zone. The most common ticket is valid for 60 minutes and is transferable (CHF 3). There are also short ride, 3-stops tickets (CHF 2) or daily tickets (from CHF 6). Tickets must be bought at the ticket machines (cash and credit cards, euros and CHF accepted) located at every stop and inside some buses going outside of the city. Even more conveniently, simply buy your ticket via SMS: send an SMS from your Swiss SIM with text "tpg1" to 788 to obtain a 1-hour, transferable ticket (CHF 3), before boarding the vehicle.

Other codes: <http://www.tpg.ch/en/web/site-international/sms-ticket>

Maps and Schedules can be found on the TPG website or TPG App (only downloadable from a Swiss app store account - which you can easily create with an email address and switch to from your original account).

Bikes

You can easily find second-hand bikes at affordable prices. Sales are regularly organised by Pro Velo Genève, the local chapter of a national association that promotes transportation by bike. UNIGE partners with Pro Velo to hold a sale at the start of each semester on University grounds. Wearing a helmet is not compulsory in Geneva, but the biking infrastructure is not complete all over the city and we therefore strongly recommend you wear one.

The most popular way to rent a bicycle in Geneva is from organisation Genève Roule (<http://www.geneveroule.ch/>), which is offering city and countryside bikes for 4 hours for free. After the 4 hours, the fee is 2 CHF per every additional hour. Bring your ID proof and 20 CHF deposit, which will be returned to you after returning the bike.

Genève Roule is open 7 days/week, 7am- 9pm.

Locations: Gare Cornavin, Carouge, Plainpalais, Paquis, Lakeside (borrow & return to any location).

Travelling in Switzerland

The Swiss railway (SBB CFF FFS) is hands-down the best way to get around the country, it is usually punctual and efficient.

The SBB CFF FFS website (<https://www.sbb.ch/en/home.html>) offers comprehensive information in English about traveling with train in Switzerland. You can buy tickets online or at any train station, with multi-lingual interfaces.

You can also buy tickets with the SBB mobile app:

(<https://www.sbb.ch/en/timetable/mobile-apps/sbb-mobile.html>).

Trains can be very pricey in Switzerland. To overcome this, visit www.swisstravelsystem.com which offers the most comprehensive information on money-saving travel passes. Some of the most popular choices are:

1) Swiss Pass, which entitles you to unlimited travel on consecutive days throughout the rail, bus and boat Swiss Travel System network. The Swiss Pass is available for 4, 8, 15 or 22 days or one month.

2) Swiss Flexi Pass, which entitles you to unlimited travel throughout rail, bus and boat Swiss Travel System network during 3, 4, 5 or 6 days of your choice within 1 month. etc.

3) Saver Day Pass. Travel throughout Switzerland for a day on all routes in the GA area for reduced costs. Whether on SBB trains or trains of other rail companies, on boats, buses, trams or postbuses – the Saver Day Pass allows you to travel in many different ways. These passes have many advantages for foreigners.

4) Supersaver tickets (up to 70% discount on a definite itinerary and time), can be purchased online only:

<https://www.sbb.ch/en/travelcards-and-tickets/tickets-for-switzerland/supersaver-tickets.html>

Scenic Routes

Visitors often find a scenic train ride as one of the most enjoyable experiences in Switzerland. Glacier Express is a 7,5 hours train ride from Zermatt to Davos / St Moritz via Andermatt (www.glacierexpress.ch). Golden Pass line extends from Lucerne to Montreux by lake Geneva via Interlaken (www.goldenpass.ch). Other popular routes include Bernina Express and Chocolate Train. Please note some of the scenic routes are not included in the Swiss Pass or Swiss Flexi Pass, but you are entitled to a discount. You can consult the route map on the Swiss Travel System web site for more detailed information.

Mobile phone

If your current mobile service do not offer inexpensive rates in Switzerland, you can buy a SIM card with only an ID at a kiosk or store (any electrical shop such as Fnac, Fust, also some tabac stores can advise you on options). If you plan to use mostly data, Lebara offers inexpensive plans from 14.90/month for 1GB of data. On www.yallo.ch, you can also obtain cheap sim cards that include texts to anywhere in Europe for 15 cents and calls for 22-25 cents/minute to most countries.

Food

Canteens/Cafeterias

Almost all UNIGE building have canteens/cafeterias that serve hot meals or sandwiches at preferential prices for students (often upon presentation of your UNIGE card, which only long-term students get).

Grocery shopping

Coop, Migros, Denner and Lidl are the main grocery store chains in Switzerland; you can find them throughout the city. At the fruit and vegetable section, it is very likely that you will need to weigh the fruits/vegetables with their respective code and print out the price label on the weighing machine. We encourage students to bring your own shopping bags, and to use as little plastic as possible in the process of grocery shopping (for example, not using a plastic bag for fruits/vegetables but sticking the label directly on them). The best plastic-free, fresh grocery shopping places will be the local farmers markets held throughout the week in various neighborhoods in [Geneva](#) or in [Carouge](#). The cheapest vegetable market is l'[Union Maraichère](#) in Carouge which sells second category veggies for cheaper prices. You can also shop directly at local farms such as [La ferme de Budé](#). Finally, there is a growing number of sustainable grocery stores selling organic, mostly local produce in bulk (so bring your own containers even for pasta, rice, spices, eggs, etc.); check out [Le Bocal Local](#), [Senza](#) and others.

Shopping and going out

You can check out some recommendations here:

- Going out in Geneva: <https://thingstodoingeneva.ch/category/going-out-in-geneva/>
- UNIGE cultural activities: <https://www.unige.ch/dife/culture/> (free tickets!)
- Shopping: <http://www.geneva.info/shopping/>
- Restaurants: <http://www.geneva.info/restaurants/>
- Museums: free admission is offered the first Sunday of every month at most city sponsored museums.

Health and wellbeing

Medical Services

There are various medical centres around town where you can easily and rapidly receive medical care for non-emergency health problems. They all have English-speaking staff. Hereafter a few addresses:

- 1) CML Magellan Network have a centre on 80, rue de Lausanne, very close to the SDG Solution Space. Phone: +41 22 908 3333 or use their online appointment system.
<https://cmrl.magellan.ch/contact/>
- 2) HelveticCare are centrally located on 2, Cours de Rive and can see you with or without appointment. Phone: +41 22 312 11.
- 3) Permanence Médico-Chirurgicale Rond-Point Plainpalais is located very close to Uni Mail and receives you with or without appointment. Phone: +41 22 329 56 56
<http://pmc-rpp.ch/presentation/>

Emergencies

HUG (Geneva University Hospital)

Rue Gabrielle-Perret-Gentil 4, 1205 Genève

<https://www.hug-ge.ch/acces-direct-aux-services-urgences-hug>

Police: 117

Ambulance: 144

Emergency service at the University Hospital of Geneva (HUG): +41 22 372 81 20

Fire brigade: 118

Psychiatric Emergencies Hospital HUG : +41 22 372 81 20

International Emergency number: 112

Rega (rescue helicopter): 1414

Code of Conduct

All forms of discrimination are proscribed, particularly sexual harassment. If you have any concern, or if you experience or witness unacceptable behavior, please report it straight away, either to a staff member or anonymously at hello@sdgsolutionspace.org

UNIGE Facilities and resources

Urban campus

UNIGE buildings are scattered all over the city: <https://www.unige.ch/presse/plans/>

However, GTI students will spend all or much of their time in the [SDG Solution Space](#). Located on the ground floor of the [Campus Biotech Innovation Park](#) (CBIP), on the [Campus Biotech](#) site, the SDG Solution Space is a cool Maker Space equipped with lots of technologies, such as surround sound and 4K Sony televisions, as well as a FabLab hosting 3D printer, 3D scanner, Laser Cutter, Go Pros, CNC Milling Machine and many more.

To get to the SDG Solution Space from Cornavin train station, take tram 15 direction Nations, and stop at Maison de la Paix. Alternatively, take Bus 1 direction of Jardin Botanique and stop at Perle du Lac. The bus route is much less convenient than the tram as it frequently gets stuck in traffic. The Solution Space is within 3 minutes walk from either tram/bus stop.

Access to CBIP, the SDG Solution Space and the whole Campus Biotech site is secured through a smartphone application, JustIN Mobile. The app is available for Android and iOS and can be used with any phone number. Once you get to Geneva, download the application. You will receive a code by sms to activate the app.

Most of the other Master's classes will take place at Uni Mail, where the Geneva School of Social Sciences (G3S) is located.

Tuition fee waiver

Exchange students are exempted from UNIGE tuition fees.

Students officially registered at UNIGE are required to pay a fee of CHF 500.- per semester. This fee is composed of a fixed administrative fee of CHF 65.- and a management fee of CHF 435.-. The management fee can be waived under certain conditions. In particular, students in difficult financial situations are welcome to apply for the fee waiver. Please pay particular attention to the two following points:

- 1) The request can only be submitted between 15 and 30 September.
- 2) The documents required to complete the request are either the last tax certificate (for the whole family if the student is still financially dependent; or the student themselves if they are financially independent) or, if the former is not available in your country, bank account statements or salary certificates.
- 3) All communications will be done through your UNIGE email (@etu.unige.ch), so remember to check it!

Detailed procedure and conditions:

<https://www.unige.ch/dife/sante-social/aides-financieres/bourses/exo-taxes/>

These pages being in French only, do not hesitate to use an online open translation service to get a first understanding, and then feel free to contact the person in charge at the Admissions Office (exo-taxes@unige.ch, +41 22 379 77 41).

French courses

Learn or improve your French! :-) More info:

<https://www.unige.ch/international/en/incoming/international-non-erasmus-students/5-once-geneva/studies/french-courses/>

<https://www.unige.ch/lettres/elcf/coursete/en/french-courses/>

<https://www.unige.ch/tandems/en/about/>

Libraries

Resources, opening hours, etc... All info here: <http://www.unige.ch/biblio/en/>

End of your stay

Taxes - applicable only to EU nationals

If you have worked during your year in Geneva, you may be eligible for tax refunds on taxes that were deducted directly from your salary, if your income is less than around CHF 16000 for the year.

Contact Uni-Emploi before leaving Switzerland. (<https://www.unige.ch/dife/carriere/contact>)

If you have not worked and receive a letter from the Cantonal Fiscal Administration regarding taxes, simply disregard the letter.

Returning your residence permit

Before leaving Switzerland, send form D to the OCPM.

More info:

<https://www.unige.ch/international/en/incoming/international-non-erasmus-students/6-end-exchange/>

Useful links

- Geneva University structure: <https://www.unige.ch/en/services/university-structure/>
- Geneva Tsinghua Initiative: <http://gt-initiative.org>
- Geneva School of Social Sciences : <http://www.unige.ch/sciences-societe/en/presentation/>
- Master in Innovation, Human Development and Sustainability:
<https://www.unige.ch/sciences-societe/formations/masters/innovation-human-development-and-sustainability/>
- Geneva Summer Schools practical info:
<https://www.unige.ch/genevasummerschools/practical-information/visa>
- UNIGE International Affairs: <https://www.unige.ch/international/en/incoming/why-geneva/>

We are looking forward to meeting you in Geneva!