

## Guidelines for newcomers in Switzerland

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### ➤ Accommodation

Once you arrive in Switzerland, it is very important to have a place to stay, even temporary, because you have to provide the authorities with an address in order to apply for all the necessary documents. Most importantly, your permit of residence. Since finding an apartment is quite difficult, we have collected the following information from our personal experience and other sources in order to help you find one:

1. On the EPFL website there are plenty of links to online portals for housing. You just need to use your GASPARE account (login and password) to access the system.

<http://www.unil-epfl-logement.ch/en/Homepage> : EPFL-Unil portal for Bachelor, Master and PhD students.

2. You can directly send an email to the address [logement@epfl.ch](mailto:logement@epfl.ch) and they will send you back a list of accommodation offers. You need to provide them with the following information:

- Name / Surname
- Birth date
- Start date at EPFL
- The name of the Lab and of the secretary whom you are in contact with
- Your EPFL working contract or EPFL work offer

3. **Students residences:** there are quite a few residences around EPFL and Lausanne to which you can apply for a room. However, some of them are restricted to Bachelor and Master students, with PhDs and Postdocs not allowed to stay at all *or* allowed to stay only for a short period of time (1-3 months). Regardless of that, we would advise you to check the internal rules of the students' residences before excluding one. There have been already two PhD students in our group staying in one of the students' residences where the PhDs/Postdocs are *normally* not allowed.

- <https://www.fmel.ch/en/> : Normally PhDs and Postdocs are not allowed. However, there have been exceptions and two PhDs in our group have been accepted.
- <https://www.estudiantines.ch/en/home>
- <http://www.unil.ch/planetebleue/en/home.html>
- <http://www.lecazard.ch/infos-chambres.html>
- <http://www.regiefonciere.ch/en/student-residences?region=4>

- <http://www.regiefonciere.ch/en/student-residences?region=5>
  - <http://www.pension-bienvenue.ch/en/index.html>
  - <http://www.aljf.ch/en/>
  - <https://www.studenthome.ch/foyer-bon-accueil-lausanne.html>
4. **Facebook:** Since the rent is very high in Lausanne, it is very common to share a flat with other people depending on the budget you are able and willing to spend. There is a group on Facebook called "Lausanne à louer", in which individuals announce apartments and rooms available for renting. You can talk directly with the people online and arrange visits. In addition to housing announcements, one can also buy second-hand furniture for very good prices. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/330486193693264/>
  5. <http://www.anibis.ch/de/immobilien-immobilien-mieten--410/advertlist.aspx> : Swiss online portal.
  6. The Chinese association in Lausanne has collected all the important information, including housing, for newcomers and can be found in following link:  
<http://cssa.epfl.ch/index.php/handbook.html>
  7. The EPFL website for housing is very well organized and you can find all the useful links there: <http://logement.epfl.ch/cms/site/habitation/lang/en/ilookforhousing>
  8. There are several associations per country organized at EPFL. You could come into contact with people from your home country and find useful and helpful information.  
<http://associations.epfl.ch/page-16295-fr.html>

➤ **Permit of residence (in French, "permis de séjour")**

The permit of residence is one of the most important documents for your stay in Switzerland. It is regarded as your identity in Switzerland and can be demanded by the authorities, therefore it is advised to always keep it on you. It could also be requested by the authorities whenever you cross the borders of the country. Moreover, the permit of residence is one of the requirements in order to open a bank account in a Swiss Bank and apply for a health insurance.

After your arrival in Switzerland, you have 15 days to apply for the permit of residence to the Contrôle des habitants (Commune). The final document of the permit of residence will be ready between 2 weeks and 6 months. Once ready, a notification letter will be sent to you by post to your home address. However, the day you will submit the application for the permit of residence, you will be given a residence certificate “Attestation de residence” (if not, you should ask for it). This can be used in order for you to open a bank account or apply for a health insurance etc.

**Important information:** The address you declare to the Commune can be a temporary one and in case you change home address, you need to declare it to the commune again (there probably will be a fee for changing the address on the permit)! When you submit the application for the permit of residence you will have to pay a fee, around 65-120 CHF depending on the Commune and the country of origin.

**Documents you need to have with you when applying for the permit of residence:**

- Passport, or identity card.
- Arrival form “Bulletin d’Arrivée” completed.
- One photo (35 mm x 45 mm, passport style).
- Birth certificate (international/legally authorised translation of birth certificate if the original is not in German/French/Italian), marriage certificate (if appropriate).
- Rental contract, or attestation from your landlord in Lausanne.
- EPFL enrollment certificate.