Università
della
Svizzera
italiana

International Relations and Study Abroad Service

Fact Sheet - Lugano Campus

2027/2028



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International rankings
USI in the Times Higher Education (THE) and Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings (QS), latest available data:

QS World University Rankings 2026
473th globally
(out of 1501 universities considered).

THE World University Rankings 2026
Range 251-300
(out of 2191 universities considered).

THE World's Best Small Universities 2024
9th worldwide
among small universities.

THE Young University Rankings 2024
44th worldwide
among 'young' universities
(less than 50 years old).

International Relations and Study Abroad website
All relevant information for incoming students, including application instruction is available on the International Relations and Study Abroad Service website:

www.usi.ch/en/university/info/relint/specific-information/incoming-exchange-students

Autumn Semester deadlines
- Deadline for nomination (via Mobility Online): 1 May
- Deadline for online registration: 15 May

Spring Semester deadlines
- Deadline for nomination (via Mobility Online): 31 October
- Deadline for online registration: 15 November

Academic calendar
- Autumn Semester
  20 September 2027 - 23 December 2027
  Exam session: early January - end of January

- Spring Semester
  21 February 2028 - 29 May 2028
  Exam session: mid June - beginning of July

Please refer to the calendars of each Faculty:
- Faculty of Communication, Culture and Society
- Faculty of Economics
- Faculty of Informatics
- Faculty of Theology of Lugano

Supplementary exam session
Early September – mid September
Students enrolled in the Autumn and Spring Semester may apply to retake exams during the supplementary Autumn session.

Mid-Term Exam Session
The following faculties hold mid-term examination sessions, in addition to the winter and summer sessions:
- Faculty of Communication, Culture and Society (Master's programmes only)
- Faculty of Economics (Master's programmes only)
- Faculty of Theology of Lugano

www.desk.usi.ch/en/usi-academic-calendar

Switzerland and Canton Ticino
Despite its small population (9 million people), Switzerland has four national languages (German, French, Italian and Romansh). The part of the Swiss Confederation that lies entirely south of the Alps is known as "Italian" Switzerland. It comprises Canton Ticino and Grigioni italiano. Italian is the official language of this region.

Language of instruction
Bachelor and Master courses at the Faculty of Informatics are entirely taught in English.
Bachelors in Communication and Philosophy are almost entirely held in Italian.
Courses of the first three semesters in the Bachelor of Economics are offered in both Italian and English.
All Masters offered at USI are taught in English, with the exception of the "Master in Lingua, letteratura e civiltà italiana" and "Master in Economia e politiche internazionali" which are held in Italian, and "Master in Public Management and Policy" which is bilingual Italian/English.

Language requirements
Non-native speakers are required to submit proof of proficiency - equivalent to at least B2 of the common European Framework of Reference for Languages - in the language of the courses they intend to take (Italian and/or English). Internal language certificates issued by the home university are also accepted.

Study programmes
Bachelor
Bachelor's programmes are offered in the following subject areas:
- Italian Language, Literature and Culture
- Communication
- Economics
- Informatics
- Data Science
- Theology
- Philosophy

www.usi.ch/en/education/bachelor

Master
Master's programmes are offered in the following subject areas:
- Humanities
- Finance
- Tourism
- Political economy
- Management and marketing
- Health
- Media and Communication
- Informatics
- Data science

www.usi.ch/en/education/master

Course lists and descriptions
- Faculty of Communication, Culture and Society
- Faculty of Economics
- Faculty of Informatics
- Faculty of Theology of Lugano

Study outline
Exchange students are free to attend a variety of classes, both at undergraduate and graduate levels. Although they are enrolled in a faculty, they are entitled to attend classes and sit examinations in the other faculties as well. However, combining courses from different programmes, faculties, and/or study levels is discouraged, as it is more likely to result in overlap of classes and/or final exams. Exams can be taken only during the exam sessions, at the set date and time and in the prescribed modality. No special exam sessions will be organized and it is not possible to request rescheduling or extra-muros exams.

In general, USI doesn't offer Bachelor's or Master's thesis exchange programmes. Students working on their project during the mobility are required to take at least one course. No ECTS credit points will be awarded for the thesis nor will the project appear in the transcript of records.
For exchange students a credit load of 20 ECTS per semester is recommended.

Approval of the study plan
The study plan must be approved by the relevant Faculty or Department of the home institution.
All students must ensure that any examination taken during the exchange term is accepted and fulfills the requirements of the original degree programme.

Class schedules
Class schedules are usually available a few weeks prior to the beginning of classes.
Class schedules are available online, on the description page of each course.

Prerequisites and limited access to courses
Incoming students are free to choose the courses they wish to take, with very few limitations. Specific restrictions will be communicated to the students after the course catalogue for the relevant academic year is finalized, approximately 1 month before the beginning of the semester. In general, the following restrictions apply:

- Students who wish to take courses in the Master in Management, Master in Marketing and Transformative Economy, and/or Master in Corporate Communication must submit their Learning Agreement at least 2 weeks before the beginning of classes
- Master in International Tourism: no access to the Study tour
- "Skills" courses are not open to exchange students
- Alpine seminars are open only to Bachelor-level students. Priority is given to USI students, exchange students who wish to take the seminars will be placed on a waitlist and will be admitted based on the availability of places.

Free of charge language courses
USI's Laboratory of Modern Languages offers free intensive and semestral courses in Italian, German, French and English, all of which are open to exchange students.

desk.usi.ch/en/language-courses-and-certificates

Tuition fees
Tuition fees are waived at USI where a reciprocal exchange agreement has been signed and students are formally nominated by their home university.

Heyning-Roelli Foundation
The Heyning-Roelli Foundation provides scholarships to talented but financially underprivileged students for travel and subsistence expenses. Please note that these are external funds and are not managed by USI. Information on the conditions and application process may be found at:

www.heyning-roelli-stiftung.ch

Application procedure
Student mobility at USI is managed through Mobility Online. Nominated students will be informed about the registration procedure in due time.

Reports of former exchange students
Students are invited to read the experience reports written by former exchange students. These reports give precious information on courses, cultural and social aspects of USI and Lugano.
The reports are available on our Responsive portal, in the Exchange experience reports section.

application.mobility.usi.ch

Mandatory information session
Exchange students will be invited to an information session where they will receive a welcome package containing their personal USI badge and all the necessary information concerning registration with the local authorities, and health insurance.
Details about the information sessions will be sent after the application deadline.

Course registration
Students will be asked to register to courses at the beginning of the semester.
The International Relations and Study Abroad Service will inform the students about the course registration procedures upon their arrival at USI.

Exam registration
Exam schedules are usually available one month after the beginning of classes. Information about exams schedules and registration will be communicated to students via e-mail by the Faculties' student administrations. It is not possible to ask for rescheduling in case of overlap.

Special educational needs
Incoming students (including joint and double degree students) may request support measures for teaching or exams.
Any measures to support teaching or exams already approved by the home university must be communicated by the university's relevant offices to the Secretariat of the USI Special Educational Needs Examination Board at commissione-bfs@usi.ch.
The Examination Board will evaluate the application of the requested measures based on the Directive and the regulations in force at USI.
More information about the request procedure, regulations and deadlines:

usi.ch/en/university/info/equality/work-life-balance/special-educational-needs

Transcript of records & credit transfer
At the end of the exchange term, the student will receive an official transcript of examination results: the certificate will show the full title of each course, the number of ECTS points value and the grade obtained.
Students are awarded with ECTS points only after they have successfully completed a course and fulfilled all its evaluation requirements. In other words, students are not awarded credits simply by class attendance or by taking part in a study abroad period.
All examinations are evaluated either on a scale of 1 (minimum) to 10 (maximum), including half (0.5) points, and where 6 is the pass mark; or on a binary scale (pass or fail).
Examination results are released approximately 6 weeks after the end of the exams. An official transcript will be made available for download from Mobility Online. The credits transfer is under the responsibility of the home institution.

Living in Switzerland
Students from non-EU/EFTA countries bound by a Visa requirement must request a Visa at the Swiss Embassy or Consulate in their home country before entering Switzerland.
All students must apply for a residence permit "L" for educational purposes within 14 days after their arrival in Switzerland.
All students must register with the residents' office at their municipality of residence (Controllo abitanti) within 8 days of arrival in Switzerland. The International Relations and Study Abroad Service will assist exchange students with the necessary procedures.

Health insurance
All Swiss residents, including foreign students holding a residence permit valid for more than three months, are obliged by law to be insured with a recognised Swiss health insurance company, providing basic coverage when in need of medical care in case of illness or accident. Foreign students living in Switzerland may be exempted from this obligation if they can prove that they are covered by an equivalent insurance in their home country. To ask for an exemption, the student must make an official request using the appropriate form.
An exemption may be requested by students belonging to one of the three following categories:

- EU/EFTA nationals who have a European Health Insurance Card.
- Students with private insurance in EU/EFTA counties who can prove that it complies with Swiss standards, i.e. that it is unlimited.
- Students with private health insurance in Non-EU/EFTA countries who can prove that such insurance complies with Swiss standards, i.e. that it is unlimited.

The International Relations and Study Abroad Service staff will assist exchange students with the procedure after their arrival in Ticino.

In order to provide students who are not eligible for an exemption with an appropriate coverage at a more affordable price, USI has negotiated an agreement with a health insurance provider (Swisscare).

desk.usi.ch/en/health-insurance-students

Housing
Students are responsible for securing their own accommodation. USI operates the USI Home housing, which is mainly reserved for exchange students and is located in Via Lambertenghi 1, 6900 Lugano - a 5-min walk from the USI campus.

desk.usi.ch/en/usi-home

If interested, students must apply via the online form as soon as possible.

desk.usi.ch/en/usihome-request-form

Due to the lmited number of rooms, accommodation at USI Home is not guaranteed.
Further information on housing is available on:

www.usi.ch/en/housing

Sport Service USI
Through its Sport Service, USI organizes a range of sporting activities which are open to all members of the university community.

www.sport.usi.ch

Living costs
Living costs for a student in Lugano are, on average, between CHF 1'500-2'000 per month (EUR 1'600-2'150).