

Researching at USI Università della Svizzera italiana

A practical guide for researchers and their families



EURAXESS Service Centre USI

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USI Università della Svizzera italiana

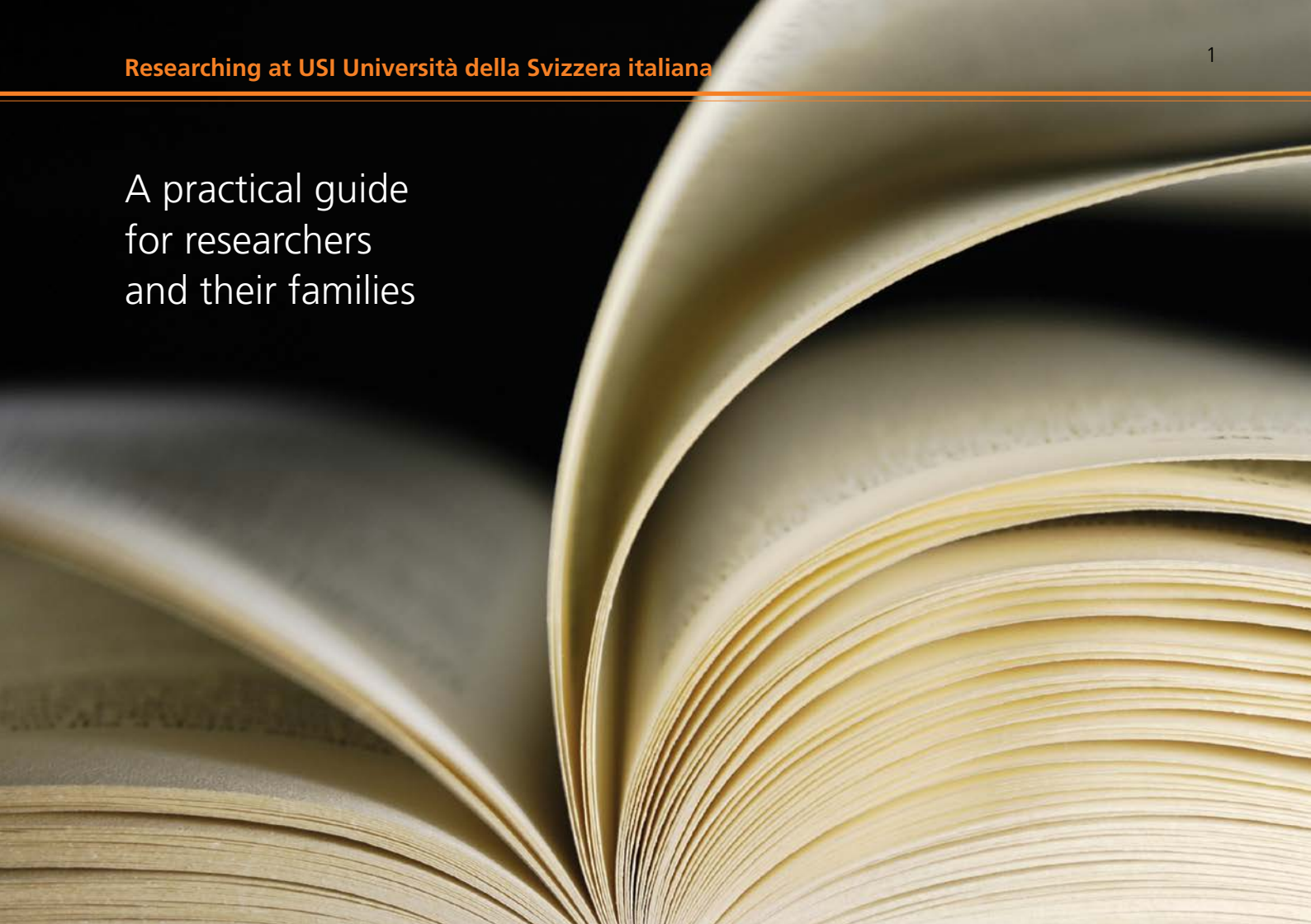
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A practical guide
for researchers
and their families



We are pleased that you have chosen USI Università della Svizzera italiana to enhance your career path. At USI you will find an excellent environment for research. Optimum conditions are assured by top-quality professorial staff, a good organisation of doctoral programme, and active, strong collaborative links with other universities and the two Federal Institutes of Technology in Switzerland, as well as institutions of higher education in Europe and all over the world. The atmosphere is international and stimulating, in a welcoming, recently built, modern campus, and in a region with high living standards: ideal and agreeable for scholars and researchers to work in.

This guide provides you with information on administrative procedures and practical matters to help you find your way about at USI and settling in Switzerland.



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Faculties and Research Fields

Founded in 1996, the USI Università della Svizzera italiana is a member of the Swiss university system together with nine other cantonal universities and two Federal Institutes of Technology, Zurich and Lausanne. It is the only Italian-speaking university in Switzerland and outside the Italian borders. With its four Faculties (Architecture, Communication Sciences, Economics and Informatics), USI is recognised as an interdisciplinary and multilingual University. The institute for research in Biomedicine (IRB, Bellinzona) has been affiliated to USI since 2010. The official language is Italian, but English is the second working language, used in the Faculty of Informatics, in many of the Master's programmes, in the Graduate Schools, as well as in the research centres.

Through a network of teaching and research agreements and partnerships with sister Swiss universities and with major universities in Northern Italy, USI has established a virtual academic bridge between Northern and Southern Europe, paving the way for inter-university Master courses, cross-border doctoral schools and research projects, notably with the Institutes of Technology of Milan and Zurich. The development of research in the sectors of urban project, finance, healthcare communication, health economics, distance teaching and in several sectors of Informatics, has considerably boosted the number of postgraduates (currently over 100) as well as funding for Swiss and European projects. USI's contained size, the integration of different disciplines and top-quality technical and IT infrastructure make up the ideal conditions for research and study.

USI in Numbers

4 Faculties

2 Campuses

30 Research institutes

503 Researchers and assistants

99 Full professors

239 Lecturers

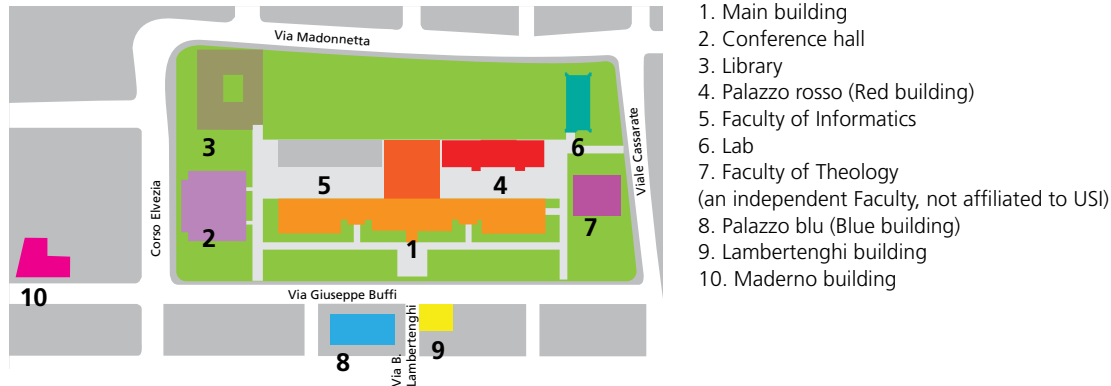
293 Phd students

USI has two campuses, one in Lugano housing the Faculties of Communication Sciences, of Economics and of Informatics; the other in Mendrisio a little market town less than ten miles to the south of Lugano, close to the Italian border which houses the Academy of Architecture. Both are located centrally and within easy access of public transport and municipal services, with shopping facilities and entertainment close to hand.

The Lugano Campus

Located near the centre of town, the Lugano Campus developed around the old building which originally hosted the city hospital and is now completely renovated. Today it accommodates the University's central administrative offices, academic staff rooms, research centres, classrooms, computer laboratories, a canteen, and dedicated study space.

Other units were erected around the original main building: in particular, the Library, a conference hall (Aula magna), a classroom building with a total seating capacity of approximately 1.000, the Informatics building, and a building called technological laboratory (LAB) entirely devoted to research.





By car

A2 Motorway: exit **Lugano Nord**, follow the direction “Lugano-Gandria” to the Veduggio Cassarate Tunnel. Exit the tunnel and keep going straight till you reach a crossroad (the stadium is in front of you) turn right at the crossroad onto via alla Bozzoreda. Keep the right lane and turn right at the traffic light onto via Ciani. Keep going straight following the river Cassarate. The underground University parking lot is passed the second traffic light after the Glass Building (The Lab) on your right. If you need to reach the University entrance instead, keep going straight passed the parking lot entrance and turn second right onto via Fusoni. Turn second right onto Via Lambertenghi and keep going straight till the end of the road until you see the University main building in front of you.

Parking facilities: Please be aware that parking is not easy in the neighbourhood of our campus. The blue parking zone requires a parking disk (max. 1 hour), while the ‘white’ designated spaces are available on payment. The underground car park has limited parking facilities and is on payment.

The University Campuses

By train – bus

By bus from the train station: go to the bus stop across the street from the train station and take the bus 6 direction “Cornaredo” and get off at “Università” (3 stops). You can also take the funicular down to the centre of town and then take a bus from downtown.

By bus from downtown Lugano: From the bus terminal on Via Pretorio take the bus 5 direction “Viganello” and get off at “Università” (3 stops) .

Train and bus schedules are available online at www.ffs.ch.

By air

Located in Agno (about 6 km from Lugano town centre), Lugano-Airport offers direct-flight connections to four main Swiss cities and some European cities (www.lugano-airport.ch). Also, Milano-Malpensa Airport, some 60 km away, may be easily reached by shuttle bus (www.sea-aeroportimilano.it).

The closest Swiss airport with international connections is Zurich Kloten, three hours away by train (www.zurich-airport.com).

The Mendrisio Campus

The USI Campus in Mendrisio hosts the Academy of Architecture. It consists of three main existing buildings: Villa Argentina, a neo-classical villa surrounded by a century-old park where the offices of the administration are located; Palazzo Turconi, formerly the town hospital, entirely renovated and modernised into a building capable of housing classrooms, laboratories and workshops; Palazzo Canavée, a new block housing the design ateliers and administrative offices. Next to these three buildings the campus comprises: the Library, originally a multi-purpose conference hall designed by Mario Botta, and the Archive of the Modern.

Public transportation ensures fast connections from Mendrisio to Lugano and Milan.



1. Villa Argentina
2. Park
3. i. CUP (Institute for the Contemporary Urban Project)
4. Palazzo Canavée
5. Gallery
6. Palazzo Turconi
7. Library

The University Campuses



By car

Exiting the motorway at Mendrisio follow the signs for the town centre and the Academy.

By train

Mendrisio's railway station (www.ffs.ch) is only a few minutes' walk from the Academy.

By air

Lugano Airport, located in Agno (about 20 km from Mendrisio), offers direct-flight connections to the main Swiss and some European cities (www.lugano-airport.ch). Also, Milano-Malpensa Airport, some 50 km away, may be easily reached by shuttle bus (www.sea-aeroportimilano.it).

The closest Swiss airport with international connections is Zurich Kloten, three hours away by train (www.zurich-airport.com).

Research Centres

Scientific research at Università della Svizzera italiana (USI) is mostly carried out within research institutes and laboratories connected to specific disciplinary areas of the various Faculties. Institutes and laboratories offer a well-focused, efficient and familiar research environment, in close collaboration with the scholars researching in other institute or faculties, and with international scientific partners. Collaboration among scholars, researchers and doctoral students of different disciplines and faculties opens a rich, vibrant and multi-disciplinary research environment. A rich programme of cultural events makes the results of research available to the general audience.

USI hosts more than 30 research centres, for a complete list visit www.usi.ch/en/centri_di_ricerca

Doctoral Programmes

Università della Svizzera italiana (USI) offers nine Doctoral programmes: Swiss Finance, Doctoral School in Healthcare Economics, New Media in Education (CROSS-FIELD doctoral school), Doctoral School on Communication & Health, Doctoral program Argumentation Practices in Context (ARGUPOLIS), the Doctoral School in Management, Foundations in Mathematics and Informatics for Computer Simulations in Science and Engineering (FoMICS), Doctoral school in Civiltà italiana, IRB International PhD Program in Immunology, Cell Biology and Biochemistry.

For more information see www.usi.ch/en/phd

From September 1st 2009 the Academy of Architecture offers the possibility of completing doctoral studies leading to a degree of Doctor in Architecture (DrArch), Doctor of Technical Sciences (DrScTec) or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). The studies are structured in the traditional form that requires an independent research under the supervision of a professor of the Academy. In general, no doctoral courses are foreseen. For more information visit the following page

<http://www.arc.usi.ch/en/l-accademia/immatricolazione/dottorato>

USI-SUPSI Research Service

The Research Service USI-SUPSI (www.ticinoricerca.ch) is a joint service of the Università della Svizzera italiana (USI) and of the University of Applied Sciences of Southern Switzerland (SUPSI). Its main objective is to provide support to researchers of both institutions when developing their research projects and to provide assistance to the organs of the University and SUPSI in planning and implementing research strategies. Working closely with the Department of Higher Education of the Canton Ticino, the Research Service USI-SUPSI helps to generating synergies and concerted efforts between the different bodies active in research. Additionally, the USI-SUPSI Research Service hosts the Euresearch (www.euresearch.ch) regional office Lugano.

USI-SUPSI Research Service

Via Lambertenghi 10a
CH-6904 Lugano
servizio.ricerca@usi.ch



Central Administration

Human resources unit

The Human resources unit is responsible for visiting scholars' contract, documentation and residence permit application.

Lugano:

- For issues concerning the working contract: Manuela Casanova (manuela.casanova@usi.ch; Office Nr. 234, Main building, office hours 09.00-12.00, Tuesday and Wednesday) and Patrizia Insabato (patrizia.insabato@usi.ch; Office 232, Main building, office hours 09.00-12.00, Monday to Friday)
- For issues concerning personal data, documents, social security, family allowances and permits: Marisa Clemenz (marisa.clemenz@usi.ch; Office 234, Main building, office hours 09.00-12.00, Monday to Friday)
- Expenses refund: Danijela Milicevic (danijela.milicevic@usi.ch; Office 234, Main building, office hours 09.00-12.00, Monday to Wednesday)

Mendrisio:

- For issues concerning the working contract, personal data, documents, forms and permits : Christiane Schroeder (christiane.schroeder@usi.ch; Office 0.08, Villa Argentina, office hours 10.30-12.00 and 13.30-15.30, Monday to Friday)

Dean's offices

- Faculty of Economics:
Gisèle Nodiroli (gisele.nodiroli@usi.ch; Office 233, Main building, reception hours 10.00-12.00)
- Faculty of Communication Sciences:
Paola Tonolla (paola.tonolla@usi.ch; Office 235, Main building, reception hours 10.00-12.00)
- Faculty of Informatics :
Elisa Larghi, Janine Caggiano, Danijela Milicevic (decanato.inf@usi.ch; Office 120, Informatics building, Mon-Tue-Fri 10.00-11.30 and 14.00-15.30, Wed-Thu 10.00-11.30)

- Academy of Architecture:
Fabiana Bernasconi (fabiana.bernasconi@usi.ch);
Annabell Silini (annabell.silini@usi.ch)
Dafne Sersale (dafne.sersale@usi.ch);
Office 0.05, Villa Argentina, office hours 13.30-15.30.

University Library Service

The Lugano University Library

The Lugano University Library (www.library.lu.usi.ch) offers its services to those interested in literature from the fields corresponding to the Faculties of Communication, Economics, Informatics, and Theology.

The library offers various multimedia tools and a comprehensive periodical collection. It also provides photocopying services, individual study spaces and free Wi-Fi.

Lending policy: To become a library user, visiting scholars must apply for a library card.

The Academy University Library

The Academy Library (<http://biblio.arch.usi.ch>) holds a wide collection of books and periodicals in the area of study of the Academy of Architecture. It provides photocopying services, computers with Internet connection for research purposes and free Wi-Fi.

Lending policy: To become a library user, visiting scholars must apply for a library card.



Equal Opportunities Service

The main objective of the Equal Opportunities Service (www.equality.usi.ch) is to ensure that gender and equal opportunity issues are endorsed at USI. Among its activities, the Equal Opportunities Service provides personalised advice and information on gender issues, organises meetings and events to alert and inform the academic community on issues relating to equal opportunities, and puts together and circulates publications and statistics on the condition of women.

More information on the support offered by the Service to reconcile work and family life and to support dual careers can be found in the chapter of this guide “Moving with Partner and Family”.

Italian Language Courses

Università della Svizzera italiana offers regularly Italian language courses, during both Autumn and Spring terms. All of its non Italian-speaking students, researchers and professors are invited to participate free of charge. The application is online.

Lugano www.italiancourse.usi.ch

Mendrisio www.arc.usi.ch/en/l-accademia/informazioni-utili/corso-di-italiano

Please notice that the courses are open to USI's students, researchers and professors only.

USI also offers an official Italian language proficiency test twice a year in cooperation with *Società Dante Alighieri* in Italy. The PLIDA Certificate attests competence in Italian as a foreign language according to a scale of six levels.

For more information, please visit www.usi.ch/en/esami_plida

USI-SUPSI Sport Service

The USI-SUPSI Sport Service (www.sport.usi.ch) has been set up to promote joint sporting activities between the Università della Svizzera italiana and the University of Applied Sciences of Southern Switzerland (SUPSI) and to coordinate local members' participation in national university sports events. The Service organises regular sports activities, free or at convenient prices, schedules are available on the service website.

Facts about Switzerland and Svizzera italiana

Switzerland

Thanks to its location (landlocked by France, Germany, Liechtenstein, Austria and Italy), Switzerland has traditionally been and will continue to be at the crossroads of major international trade routes. From Switzerland you can reach many major European cities in two hours or less.

With its population of 380,500, Zurich is the business hub of Switzerland and one of its three main financial centres. Bern (129,000 inhabitants) is the political capital; Basel (160,000 inhabitants) is home to renowned pharmaceutical and chemical companies; and Geneva (186,000 inhabitants) is the headquarters of numerous international organizations.

With its small population (7.952 million people), Switzerland has four national languages: 65% of the population speak Swiss German, a strong dialect of German; 22% speak French; 12% Italian, and 1% Romansch, a minority language spoken only in Canton Grisons.

The Swiss Confederation is based on a federal system. Its present form was established by the 1848 Constitution. An historically evolved federal structure gives each of its 26 Cantons a considerable degree of political freedom and administrative independence. While Switzerland is not a member of the European Union (EU) it is economically and culturally integrated with it. In 2002, Switzerland became a member of the United Nations.

Switzerland's famous mountain ranges largely determine the variety of local and regional microclimates. In the South, Ticino enjoys a hot, Mediterranean climate, but the rest of the country mostly has a central European climate, with average temperatures typically in the low- to mid 20°C in the Summer, and between 2° and 6°C in Winter.

Svizzera italiana

That part of the Swiss Confederation which lies entirely south of the Alps is known as "Svizzera italiana", Switzerland's Italian-speaking region. It comprises the whole of Canton Ticino and four valleys of Canton Grisons (namely Mesolcina, Calanca, Bregaglia and Poschiavo) for a total population of just over 320,000. Lugano is the main city: it forms a conurbation of more than 57,000 inhabitants and is the third financial centre in Switzerland after Zurich and Geneva. Other towns worth

mentioning are: Bellinzona (the seat of Canton Ticino's government), Locarno, Mendrisio and Chiasso. Italian is the official language for the whole region: it is spoken by its local residents and used in all forms of official communication in the public sphere and administration. Most local people are to some degree conversant with French and/or German, rather less with English. Italoophone Switzerland blends cultural components that are typically Italian with a tradition of politics and administration that is unmistakably Swiss. Ticino has experienced a great expansion in tourism; and has fully integrated its role as a rail and road axis between North and South. The combination of these two factors has made Ticino a region open and receptive to different influences and able to act as a genuine bridge linking central Europe to the Mediterranean area.

Some of its attractive features and opportunities worth highlighting include: a rich selection of cultural events, a natural landscape of moving beauty characterized by its lakes (Lugano and Locarno are the main lakeside towns), but also for its mountains (good ski resorts for winter sports); and a temperate and sunny climate.



Visa and Permits

Foreign researchers working at USI must apply for a residence permit to the Office of Foreigners (*Servizio regionale degli stranieri*) and, within 8 days from their arrival in Switzerland, register with the Inhabitants Control (*Ufficio controllo abitanti*).

Foreign researchers not from EU/EFTA countries must also apply for a visa to the Swiss embassy or consulate in their home country prior to entering Switzerland (visa application process: 8 to 10 weeks).

Scholars hosted at the Lugano Campus

The Human resources unit will follow you step by step through the procedure of acquiring your residence permit.

The contact person is Manuela Casanova (manuela.casanova@usi.ch); Office 234, Main building, office hours 09.00-12.00, Monday to Thursday).

Scholars hosted at the Mendrisio Campus

The Human resources officer of the Accademia will follow you step by step through the procedure of acquiring your residence permit.

The contact person is Christiane Schroeder (christiane.schroeder@usi.ch); Office 0.08, Villa Argentina, office hours 10.30-12.00 and 13.30-15.30, Monday to Friday).

Useful addresses and links

Office of Foreigners Lugano

Via S. Balestra 31-33

6900 Lugano

tel. +41 91 814 55 00

Hours of service:

Monday - Friday: 9.00 - 11.45 and 14.00 - 16.00

Office of Foreigners Mendrisio

Via Pollini 29

6850 Mendrisio

tel. +41 91 814 55 00

Hours of service:

Monday-Friday: 9.00 - 11.45 and 14.00-16.00

Inhabitants Control Lugano - Puntocittà

Via della Posta 8

6900 Lugano

tel. +41 58 866 6000

puntocitta@lugano.ch

Hours of service:

Mon/Wed/Fri: 7.30 - 12.00 and 13.30 -17.00

Tue/Thu: 7.30 - 18.00

Inhabitants Control Mendrisio, Townhall

Via Municipio 13

6850 Mendrisio

tel. +41 58 688 34 00

Hours of service:

Mon-Tue-Wed-Fri: 10.00-12.00 and 14.00-16.00,

Thu: 10.00-12.00 and 16.00-18.00

Cantonal population section:

www.ti.ch/popolazione

Federal Office for Migration:

www.bfm.admin.ch

Federal department of Foreign Affairs:

www.eda.admin.ch

Housing

USI provides a housing service to help visiting scholars in their search for a place to stay. The Accommodation Service (www.alloggi.usi.ch) runs an online database with regularly updated vacancy adverts, provides language assistance and basic information on tenancy laws and general guidelines on housing. On the service website there is also a list of useful links for those in search of an accommodation. In addition, the Service publishes vacancy adverts on its Facebook page (www.facebook.com/usialloggi).

Visiting scholars seeking accommodation for the duration of their stay in Lugano are invited to contact the Service for a one-to-one advice.

Scholars hosted at the Lugano Campus:

The contact person is Patrizia Bianchi

(alloggi@usi.ch; Office 220, Main Building; front desk 13.30-15.00 or by appointment)

Scholars hosted at the Mendrisio Campus:

The contact person is Christiane Schroeder

(alloggi.me@usi.ch; Office 0.08, Villa Argentina, office hours 10.30-12.00 and 13.30-15.30, Monday to Friday).

Insurances

Health insurance

All those who reside in Switzerland are required by law to be insured by a recognized Swiss health insurance company, providing at least basic coverage for medical care in case of illness or accident. Foreign scholars living in Switzerland for a period not exceeding 12 months may be exempted from this obligation if they can prove they are covered by an equivalent insurance in their home country.

More information on health insurance and exemption request forms can be found at www.usi.ch/healthinsurance

Swiss health insurance

If you do not qualify for an exemption, or if your insurance coverage is not valid in Switzerland, you must purchase a Swiss private insurance policy. All recognized insurance companies offer the same basic coverage, but at different premiums, basing on your place of residence, your age and the level of deductible originally opted for.

An exhaustive list of providers and premiums may be found at www.usi.ch/healthinsurance

By paying supplementary premiums, you may obtain extra benefits not covered by the basic plan (e.g. private room in hospital, special therapies, indemnities for loss of earnings caused by illness or injury).

Premium reductions

The premium can be reduced if the insured party accepts a higher deductible (Italian: “franchigia”) or other limitations imposed by some companies.

People employed for at least 8 hours a week are covered by their employer for medical care and loss of income as a result of accidents (even if occurred outside work). By presenting a statement signed by your employer, you are granted a discount on the premium. If you stop working or reduce your weekly working hours, the full coverage must be restored.

Residents experiencing financial difficulties may apply at their town's council office for a public subsidy to reduce the premium (does not apply to doctoral students and assistants/researchers).

Useful links

Common institution under the Federal Health Insurance Act: www.kvg.org

Federal Office for Public Health: www.bag.admin.ch

To compare premiums visit the website: www.comparis.ch

Personal liability insurance

Some lease contracts may require you to purchase a personal liability insurance, as well as a household insurance which will cover damage caused by water, burglary, or broken windows. Insurance premiums are reasonable.

For information on premiums visit www.comparis.ch

Social Security System and Income Tax

Social security in Switzerland

Switzerland has a solid and effective social insurance network, providing all its citizens who live and work here ample cover against risks whose financial consequences they may find hard to face on their own.

The Swiss social security system is organized in five sections:

1. The Swiss old-age, survivors' and disability insurance which is divided into three sectors:
 - First Pillar: old-age, survivors' and disability insurance scheme. It is the basic insurance. It is compulsory for all persons who live or work in Switzerland and covers:
 - i. Retirement (old-age pensions)
 - ii. Disability (disability pensions)
 - iii. The death of the spouse or parent (survivor's pensions)It is run by compensation offices.
 - Second pillar (compulsory only for citizens on a regular and fixed income in Switzerland): occupational retirement scheme. It is an occupational insurance, compulsory for all those working in Switzerland with an annual income of at least CHF 21'150.- (as per 1.1.2015). It is run by the retirement funds the employer is affiliated to.
 - Third Pillar (optional): Individual retirement account, savings scheme on a fixed deposit account, subject to tax relief (available exclusively to Swiss residents)
2. Protection against the consequences of a disease or accident
3. Income compensation allowances in case of military and civil service, and in case of maternity
4. Unemployment insurance
5. Family allowances

The insurance cover provided by these insurance plans consists in the payment of benefits such as annuities, compensation for loss of earnings or family allowances, or in the reimbursement of expenses caused by disease or accident.

The benefits paid out by the various insurance branches are funded primarily on the basis of social security contributions deducted from salary. In the case of health insurance policies, on the other hand, each policy holder pays his/her own premium.

For more information on the Swiss social security system visit the website of the Federal Social Insurance Office:

www.bsv.admin.ch → Topics → Overview → Basics

List of Acronyms

AVS: Assicurazione Vecchiaia e Superstiti (Old Age and Survivor's Insurance)

AI: Assicurazione Invalidità (Disability Insurance)

IPG: Indennità per Perdita di Guadagno (Income Compensation)

AD: Assicurazione Disoccupazione (Unemployment Insurance)

AINP: Assicurazione contro gli infortuni non professionali (Non professional accident insurance)

Social contributions and tax levied at source

Social contributions

AVS/AI/IPG: 5.15%

AD: 1.1%

AINP: 0.647%

Tax levied at source

Contracts at USI envisage the withholding of Swiss income tax for foreign assistants and researchers (please see the terms of your contract). The tax rate is set by the Inland Revenue Office of Canton Ticino taking into account the employee's salary and personal situation. An official tax certificate issued in Italian by the Inland Revenue Office of the Canton Ticino is handed in within end of February of the following year. The Human resources unit is providing an English version upon request. For non-residents in Switzerland coming from double taxation treaty countries the Swiss income is also subject to Swiss tax. Double taxation is avoided by producing the tax certificate to the revenue authorities of the Faculty member's home country. The amount withdrawn at source in Switzerland is then deducted from the total of the researcher's revenue taxes.

All deductions (social contributions and income tax collected at source) are to be considered as permanent and therefore nonrefundable.

Cost of Living

Year by year statistics show that Switzerland is one of the most expensive countries in the world. Prices are particularly high for consumer goods, housing and health insurance. Swiss wages take into account this and accordingly Switzerland has one of the highest salary averages.

Public Transport and Driving

Buses

Lugano

An efficient network of buses (TPL SA) assures easy travel throughout the city and its immediate outskirts. Villages in the surrounding district can be reached by regional buses (ARL, Autolinee Regionali Luganesi) and the yellow coaches operated by the postal system (Autopostale). For further information, please visit www.lugano.ch/en/lugano-pratica/mobilita

Mendrisio

The no. 1 bus and a yellow coach (Autopostale) assure regular service between the Academy of Architecture and the towns of Chiasso and Como. Schedules and information on regional bus passes are available on the website www.arcobaleno.ch

Rail

Visiting scholars who plan to travel around Switzerland during their stay should investigate the 'Half Fare' Pass, available at ticket offices of the Swiss Federal Railway station. Further information can be found at www.ffs.ch.

Discounted travel passes for employees

USI offers yearly travel passes (Abbonamento arcobaleno) covering the home-work commute at a discounted fare (up to 40% of the total amount). Eligible employee categories are the following: administration staff, professors, student-assistants with contract, PhD students with contract, and post-doc researchers.

For more information, consult SOSTA's website: <http://www.sosta.usi.ch/mobilita.htm>

Driving

The legal driving age in Switzerland is 18. If you have a valid foreign license, you may drive for up to 12 months. If you are staying longer you have to exchange your license for a Swiss license.

For more information visit www.ti.ch/circolazione (in Italian only).

Foreign residents may use their foreign vehicles on which duty has not been paid in Switzerland. However, a customs permit is needed for this, for more information visit the website of the Swiss Federal Customs Administration:

www.ezv.admin.ch → Information for private individual → Goods and means of transport

Bicycles

Bicycles are the most effective and efficient way to move around Lugano and Mendrisio.

The Lugano campus has a bike sharing station for the Velopass Lugano-Paradiso network, the annual subscription is free for USI members. More information at www.sosta.usi.ch/usivelopassEN.html



Communication

Postal service

Stamps, packing materials, and other postal services may be purchased from the post office; stamps may also be purchased from vending machines. Other services include money transfers from abroad (International Money Orders are redeemable only at main post offices). The Swiss Post also offers banking services, for further information visit www.post.ch

Lugano 1 (main post office)

Via della Posta 7

6900 Lugano

tel. +41 0848 888 888

Hours of service: Monday-Friday 7.30 - 19.00, Saturday: 8.00 – 16.00

Mendrisio Station (main post office)

Via Franscini 7

6850 Mendrisio

tel. +41 0848 888 888

Hours of service: Monday-Friday 8.30 – 12.00 and 13.30- 18.00, Saturday 8.30 – 11.00

Telephone and mobile phone system

Most public phones do not accept coins. Phone cards may be purchased from post offices, newsstands and kiosks, as well as from some cafés and supermarkets.

Information about mobile subscription and prepaid plans is available at shops and post offices across Ticino. Alternatively, you may compare offers or special deals on the website www.comparis.ch

Swiss SIM cards can be used in any phone that supports the GSM standard on the 900/1800 Mhz bands.

News

Radio and TV

Radiotelevisione svizzera di lingua italiana (RSI) is the national radio and TV service in Italian, it owns three radio stations, two TV channels and a multimedia platform (www.rsi.ch). RSI is part of the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation (SRG SSR) which, through its regional partners, offers 18 radio stations and 7 television channels in the four national languages.

In addition, in Ticino there are a few private radio, such as Radio 3iii and Radio Fiume Ticino, and one private TV channel called TeleTicino.

License fees

In Switzerland anyone who owns a radio or television must pay license fees. Billag AG is responsible for collecting license fees, you can register your household online at www.billag.ch. For more information on the license fee visit www.srgssr.ch/en/faq

Newspapers

The Italian speaking region of Switzerland counts three newspapers: Corriere del Ticino, LaRegion Ticino and Giornale del Popolo. There is also a free newspaper called 20 Minuti which can be found at bus stops and train stations.

News portal sites

Swissinfo.ch provides news in English: www.swissinfo.ch

There are several portals publishing news on Ticino and Switzerland, such as www.tio.ch.

Public Libraries

In addition to USI libraries in Lugano and Mendrisio, Canton Ticino relies on four cantonal libraries in Bellinzona, Locarno, Lugano and Mendrisio and several other specialised libraries.

More information on the libraries are available on the website www.sbt.ti.ch

Culture and Leisure

The lakes and nature of Canton Ticino, together with the various cultural institutions housed in the Southern corner of Switzerland, provide a rich choice of free time activities.

Tourist information

Ticino tourism: www.ticino.ch

Lugano tourism: www.lugano-tourism.ch

Mendrisio tourism: www.mendrisiotourism.ch

Events and cultural programs

Events in and around Lugano: www.agendalugano.ch

Cultural institutions and events: www.ti.ch/osservatorioculturale

Activities for children: www.ticinoperbambini.ch

Movies: www.ticinocinema.ch

Museums: www.museums.ch

Opening Hours

Shops

The main supermarkets are open Monday to Friday from 8.30 to 19.00, Thursday is late night shopping in Canton Ticino with main shops and shopping malls open until 21.00. Saturdays shops are open until 17.00, in the Summer some malls and shops close at 18.00.

Banking

Banks are generally open from 9.00 to 16.30 and stay close on Saturdays.



This part of the guide is especially dedicated to those visiting scholars who wish to move to Switzerland with their partner and family. USI is conscious of the importance of having a balance between working and family life. The Equal Opportunities Service commits to support USI staff in reaching that balance by supporting dual career couples and researchers with children.

The Equal Opportunities Service and the Equal Opportunities Representative are at your disposal for any question on dual career support and family welfare.

Equal Opportunities Service

Via G. Buffi 13 (Room 257)

CH-6904 Lugano

tel. +41 58 666 4612

fax +41 58 666 4647

equality@usi.ch

www.equality.usi.ch

Dr. Arianna Carugati-Giugliano

Head of Service and Equal Opportunities Representative

arianna.carugati@usi.ch



Moving with Partner and Family

Family Reunification

In Switzerland Family reunification is regulated by federal and cantonal laws, differences apply between EU/EFTA nationals and third country nationals. Cantonal Migration Authority of Canton Ticino:

Sezione della popolazione
Ufficio della migrazione
Via Lugano 4
CH-6501 Bellinzona
tel. +41 91 814 7211
di-sp@ti.ch
www.ti.ch/popolazione

Useful links

Federal Office for Migration: www.bfm.admin.ch
Switzerland's Official web portal: www.ch.ch (select "Your life" in the sitemap)

Dual Career Support

USI commits to support those couples who are facing a dual-career situation, where both partners have undertaken a demanding professional path, and is aware of the issues mobility may arise in these cases. USI engages in promoting dual career couples (DCC) and takes into account the demands of researchers (male or female) faced with the challenge of adjusting their career and mobility demands to fit those of their partners.

The Equal Opportunities Service offers counseling to researchers confronted with a dual-career situation so as both partners can pursue a professional fulfilling career. The support given by the Service is individual, the Equal Opportunities Representative is at your disposal for further questions and advice. For information visit: www.equality.usi.ch/en/dual-career-couples

Useful links

Carrière2, a joint project of USI and its sister universities of the francophone region: www.carriere2.ch

School System

The Swiss school system is organized according to the federal political structure, each canton is responsible for organizing its education and teaching institutions. In general, children attend public schools.

In Ticino compulsory schooling begins at the age of 4 and comprises 11 schooling years. Nevertheless, most children attend 1 year of pre-school education from the age of 3. The language of instruction is Italian.

Age	Level	
0	Asilo nido (pre-school)	Parents with children of pre-school age may enrol them with crèches and in with day care centres outside the family, against payment.
3/4	Scuola dell'infanzia (nursery school)	Nursery school is compulsory from the age of 4. It is not fee-paying.
4	Scuola elementare (primary school)	Compulsory education begins at the age of 4 and covers 11 years of schooling, divided into 2 years of nursery school; 5 years of primary (elementari) level and 4 years of lower secondary level (scuole medie).
11	Scuola media (lower secondary school)	
15	Scuole post-obbligatorie (post-compulsory education) - scuole medie superiori - scuole professionali	On completion of their compulsory education, pupils may carry on studying by choosing either an upper-secondary school or in secondary vocational schools (technical college, etc.).

State schools

The School Division of the Department of Education of Canton Ticino (www4.ti.ch/decs/ds) makes available any necessary information on state schools and details on how to enrol.

Moving with Partner and Family

Divisione della scuola
Viale Portone 12
6500 Bellinzona
tel. +41 91 814 1811
fax +41 91 814 1819
decs-ds@ti.ch

Private / Independent schools

In addition to public schools, in Ticino there are several privately run schools. Some of them may use English as their language of instruction.

Family Welfare

Crèches, child-care and extra-school facilities

USI does not run nursery services of its own, but relies instead on existing childcare facilities in the Canton recognised or authorised by Ticino's Department of Health and Social Services. Access to nursery care is facilitated for small children of USI staff by reserving places for them in crèches of Lugano and Mendrisio within easy distance of the University campuses. Besides, USI's Equal Opportunities Service has come forward with a special programme for families of limited economic means with small children. The point of the scheme is to provide financial assistance for any member of staff seeking a day-care centre for their children.

USI also provides any interested members of staff dedicated space for child-care at the Lugano and Mendrisio campuses. For information please visit www.equality.usi.ch/en/asili-nido

USI also grants financial aid to members of its staff with limited means who are obliged to entrust their children (aged more than 3) to extra-school care and facilities. For information please visit www.equality.usi.ch/en/servizi-extrascolastici



Social security and child benefits

In case of emergency in Ticino families may receive support from several dedicated services. The cantonal authorities support families through family allowances. For information and useful links on services and child benefits visit

www.equality.usi.ch/en/servizi-famiglie

The family is getting bigger is a booklet published by the Equal Opportunities Service to help all parents and parents-to-be. It can be found online on the service's website or requested in paper form at the Service.



Campus Life

USI Card and account

At USI visiting scholars staying for more than six months can benefit from a personalised magnetic card which can be used to open doors (key function), as a Library user's card, and to activate printers and photocopiers, and a personal account which includes personal e-mail address, full access to USI's IT network and online resources.

Visiting scholars spending less than six months at USI will receive a guest card and a guest computer account.

Accessibility

The Lugano and Mendrisio campuses are duly equipped with the appropriate facilities.

For specialist advice and assistance, please contact:

Pro Infirmis Luganese e Mendrisiotto

Via dei Sindacatori 1

6900 Massagno

tel. +41 91 960 2870

fax +41 91 960 2888

www.proinfirmis.ch

Security

Security on campus has been entrusted to a team of security officers, trained to carry out their duties discreetly. However, as part of their responsibilities, they are authorised to stop anybody acting suspiciously on the premises, particularly in the computer area, which is open only to students.

Lugano

sicurezza@usi.ch

Mendrisio

sicurezza.me@usi.ch

Practical Information

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted in enclosed public areas, rooms, and offices, corridors included.

The administrative staff, moreover, may issue specific rules and arrangements of their own.

Please bear in mind that a new legislation came into force in Ticino in 2007 which forbids smoking in all closed areas such as restaurants, bars, discos, etc.

SostA - Towards a sustainable university

The SostA project promotes environmental, economical and social awareness and responsibility at USI. The aims of the project are to improve the mobility and the efficiency in terms of energy consumption; to introduce the concept of sustainability in everyday campus management activities; and to increase environment responsibility awareness among academic staff, students and USI staff members.

At www.sosta.usi.ch you can find useful advices on mobility and consumption issues, as well as current actions taken at both Lugano and Mendrisio campuses.



Academic Calendar 2016-2017

Autumn Semester 2016	19 September – 23 December 2016
Public holidays	1 November 2016 (All Saint's Day) 8 December 2016 (Immaculate Conception)

Spring Semester 2017	20 February – 2 June 2017
Public holidays	19 March 2017 (St. Joseph) 14 April 2017 (Good Friday) 16 April 2017 (Easter Day) 17 April 2017 (Easter Monday) 1 May 2017 (Labour Day) 25 May 2017 (Ascension Day) 5 June 2017 (Whit Monday)

Other Public Holidays in Ticino	25 December 2016 (Christmas Day) 26 December 2016 (Boxing Day) 1 January 2017 (New year's Day) 6 January 2017 (Epiphany) 15 June 2017 (Corpus Christi) 29 June 2017 (Sts. Peter and Paul) 1 August 2017 (Swiss National Day)
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Academic Calendar 2017-2018

Autumn Semester 2017	18 September – 22 December 2017
Public holidays	1 November 2017 (All Saint's Day) 8 December 2017 (Immaculate Conception)

Spring Semester 2018	19 February – 2 June 2018
Public holidays	19 March 2018 (St. Joseph) 30 March 2018 (Good Friday) 1 April 2018 (Easter Day) 2 April 2018 (Easter Monday) 1 May 2018 (Labour Day) 10 May 2018 (Ascension Day) 21 May 2018 (Whit Monday)

Other Public Holidays in Ticino	25 December 2017 (Christmas Day) 26 December 2017 (Boxing Day) 1 January 2018 (New year's Day) 6 January 2018 (Epiphany) 31 May 2018 (Corpus Christi) 29 June 2018 (Sts. Peter and Paul) 1 August 2018 (Swiss National Day)
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Practical Information

Emergency Phone Numbers

144 Ambulance

117 Police

118 Fire service

140 Road Breakdown service

145 Urgent cases of intoxication (French, German, English)

1414 Helicopter Rescue (Rega)

091 800 18 28 Doctors and pharmacy on duty (nights and weekends)

Hospitals

Lugano

Regional Hospital Lugano “Ospedale Civico”

Via Tesserete 46

6900 Lugano

tel. +41 91 811 6111

Regional Hospital Lugano “Ospedale italiano”

Via Capelli

6962 Viganello

tel. +41 91 811 7511

Mendrisio

Regional Hospital “Ospedale Beata Vergine”

Via Turconi 23

6850 Mendrisio

tel. +41 91 811 3111

Before Leaving

- ❑ Check your **entry and residence conditions**.
If necessary, apply for a visa.
- ❑ Check your **health insurance** cover.
 - If your health insurance is valid in Switzerland throughout your stay ask for an exemption.
 - If your health insurance is not valid compare providers and premiumsSee: [Living in Ticino](#) → [Health Insurance](#)
- ❑ Get in contact with the **Accommodation Service**.
Visit the service website for useful links and vacancy adverts.
See: [Living in Ticino](#) → [Housing](#)
- ❑ Depending on the age of your **children**, contact schools or childcare facilities.
See: [Moving with Partner and Family](#)

Upon Arrival

- ❑ Declare your **vehicle** to the Swiss Customs.
See: [Living in Ticino](#) → [Public Transport and Driving](#)
- ❑ Apply for your **residence permit**.
See: [Living in Ticino](#) → [Visa and Permits](#)
- ❑ Within 8 days from your arrival, register your arrival with the **Inhabitants Control** of your town.
See: [Living in Ticino](#) → [Visa and Permits](#)
- ❑ Within 1 year, apply for a Swiss **driver's license**.
See: [Living in Ticino](#) → [Public Transport and Driving](#)

