



# Master in Innovation, Human Development and Sustainability Handbook

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UNIVERSITÉ  
DE GENÈVE

GENEVA SCHOOL OF  
SOCIAL SCIENCES

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## Introduction

### Introduction

The **Master in Innovation, Human Development and Sustainability (MIHDS)** emerged in 2017 from a shared goal of the **University of Geneva (UNIGE)**, **Tsinghua University (THU)** and several intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) located in Geneva: to set up a high-level, innovative educational program related to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in 2015.

Compared to other masters' programs dealing with the SDGs, the MIHDS is highly interdisciplinary and focuses on developing concrete solutions for achieving the SDGs through hands-on, team-based and project-driven activities, in parallel with courses on the fundamentals of sustainable development in all its dimensions - human, environmental and institutional – taught by experts from UNIGE, THU and a range of IGOs and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Geneva. At UNIGE, the MIHDS is hosted by the **Geneva School of Social Sciences (G3S)** and involves a partnership with the **Geneva School of Economics and Management (GSEM)** and the **Institute for Environmental Sciences (ISE)**.

The MIHDS offers two tracks (further details are provided from page 21):

- The Dual Degree Track is an intercultural and interacademic experience between Switzerland and China, and more specifically between Geneva (the city with the most international organizations in the world), Beijing (THU main campus in the capital's high-tech Zhongguancun district) and Shenzhen (THU graduate campus in the city that is the dynamo of production and innovation in China). Courses given by experts in China provide deep insight into how major sustainable development issues are addressed in the world's largest economy. The Dual Degree can be started either at UNIGE or THU, depending on where the student applies to the program. Students will obtain two degrees at the end of their studies. At THU, where the program is organized by the **School of Public Policy and Management (SPPM)**, **students obtain** a "Master of Science in Management Science"; at UNIGE, they obtain a "Master in Innovation, Human Development and Sustainability."
- The Single Degree Track involves two semesters of course work at UNIGE and one semester at a partner university in Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, or Latin America. The list of partners is confirmed at the beginning of the academic year; a dedicated information session is organized in October. All partner universities are well-known for the quality of their master's programs in sustainability or a field that aligns with a MIHDS specialization. A limited number of spaces is available at each partner university. Students apply during the first semester, following a procedure designed to prioritize students' first choices.

This handbook aims to provide practical information to incoming MIHDS students. Please take a moment to peruse it prior to your arrival in Geneva. More details will be given at the very beginning of the academic year.

More information:

[Master in Innovation, Human Development and Sustainability](#)

<https://sdgsolutionspace.org/>

## Practicalities

### Visa

Depending on your nationality, you may need a visa to enter Switzerland and study in Geneva. **Since it can take up to three months to obtain a visa, you should start as soon as possible** once your decision to join the Master's is taken. In the best-case scenario the process should take around one month time. Please consider in your timeline that some of your administrative documents will have to be translated and/or certified beforehand.

1. Consult the [website of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs](#) to find out if you need a visa. 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. Once you have received your letter of acceptance, you may apply for a “National visa for a stay of more than 90 days” at the Swiss Embassy in your country/region.
3. Cost: enquire at the Swiss Embassy of your country/region.
4. Your visa allows you to enter Switzerland. Once in Switzerland you must ask for a residence permit. This is mandatory for all students (see below).

More info here:

<https://www.unige.ch/exchange/en/incoming/why-geneva/students/international-non-erasmus-students/4-preparing-your-exchange/visa/>

### Residence Permit

In Switzerland, a Student Residence Permit is compulsory for any stay over 3 months. The Swiss visa allows you to enter the country but once in Switzerland, you must ask for a residence permit at the local population office. Upon arrival, you must apply for your Student Residence Permit at the Cantonal Office for Population and Migration (OCPM). The procedure is different for EU/EFTA citizens - please find more info here:

<https://www.ge.ch/en/ask-student-permit>

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

Please note:

- Europeans/EFTA citizens must attach the following documentation: proof of school registration; 1 ID photo with last name and first name on the back; evidence of financial means or official notification of your scholarship.
- Non-Europeans must attach the following documentation: attestation of eligibility to school; CV and letter of motivation stating intentions after completion of studies; detailed study plan; financial guaranties or form O only if you have a family member guarantor who lives in CH; copy of rental contract or written statement of landlord (with copy of main rental contract or of landlord's ID); a copy of police record (certificate of good conduct) should be provided, but after checking with the authorities we found out that permit applications will be processed even without, such a document might be requested later only in case of doubt. Residence permit fees for non-European citizens: about CHF 250.-
- Swiss citizens that are from another canton should announce their arrival in the following 14 days. They should attach a photocopy of their Swiss ID; copy of rental contract or written statement of landlord; letter of departure from the incoming canton. Fees for Swiss outside of Geneva is CHF 50 -.

**Population office for Geneva Canton:**

Office Cantonal de la Population et des Migrations (OCPM)

Route de Chancy 88, 1213 Onex

Phone: +41 22 546 48 88

Email: [sejour.ocpm@etat.ge.ch](mailto:sejour.ocpm@etat.ge.ch)

Opening hours: Mon-Fri: 7h30am-4h30pm (may change without notice)

Please be aware that not all employees speak English. It is highly encouraged to have a French-speaker assisting you during the procedure.

**In case you found an accommodation outside Geneva Canton (for example in Vaud Canton), you will need to apply for a residence permit at the respective local office. Before choosing to live in France, please carefully consider the different permits, as it will not be possible for a non-EU student.**

When you leave Geneva for more than 3 months or indefinitely, do not forget to inform the OCPM.

**Notification for students doing an internship:** cantonal authorities strictly apply relevant laws regarding all forms of student employment. Internships that are required as part of a study program (as is the case for the MIHDS dual degree track), while not requiring a change to a B Permit, **must be announced to the OCPM by means of the [E Form available on the OCPM website](#).** The form must be signed by the host institution.

## Work

**Warning:**

Students with European citizenship can work upon arrival in Switzerland but are limited to a maximum of 15 hours per week while classes are in session (roughly mid-September to Christmas and mid-February to mid-May).

**Students with non-European citizenship can only work after residing in Switzerland for 6 months**, also up to 15 hours per week under the same conditions as described before.

Estimated salary: student jobs generally pay from CHF 20 to CHF 30 an hour. During holidays, students can work **full-time** (this varies according to the field of activity).

More information from the University of Geneva's Career Center: <https://vie-de-campus.unige.ch/develop-your-skills/employability/working-during-your-studies>. On their website, you can also find a platform with student jobs, which often are accessible to non-French speaking students, including baby-sitting, language classes, catering, etc. It's a great tool!

## Health and accident insurance

Health insurance is **compulsory for everyone residing for more than 3 months**. You must purchase medical and accident insurance upon your arrival.

**1.** International students are eligible for reduced-price health insurance. 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. The lower the deductible, the higher the monthly premium. Therefore, think carefully about the option you choose; it might be advantageous to pay a slightly higher premium but have a smaller deductible. Details on ScoreStudies' website: <https://scorestudies.ch/en/>.

Check if you are eligible for a Swiss healthcare exemption: <https://www.ge.ch/affiliation-obligatoire-caisse-assurance-maladie/dispense-assurance-maladie-etudiants-etrangers>.

If eligible, please make sure to send the required documents and the form to the service office.

**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” (EN). Ideally, this should be done before your arrival in Switzerland.

**3.** European students are covered by their national insurance. Do not forget to bring your European Insurance Card, as you will have to apply for an exemption. You have to send a copy of your insurance card at:

**Service cantonal de l'assurance-maladie (SAM), Route de Frontenex 62 - 1207 Genève. For questions: sam@etat.ge.ch**

Details here: <https://www.unige.ch/exchange/en/incoming/why-geneva/students/international-non-erasmus-students/4-preparing-your-exchange/health-and-accident-insurance/>

## Accommodation

It can be very difficult to find reasonably priced accommodation in Geneva, so make sure you start your search as early as possible. You can apply for UNIGE-managed accommodation as soon as your registration is processed. To do so:

- **Create an account and follow the instructions on the Accommodation Registration Portal of the University of Geneva:** <https://www.logetud.ch>. Keep a constant look for any updates and apply as soon as possible, ideally 3 months before the beginning of the classes.

Also, some **current MIHDS** students who will spend next year, or one semester abroad may be able to swap their accommodation with you. Other possibilities include:

- Other accommodation opportunities offered by the UNIGE Accommodation Office: <https://www.unige.ch/batiment/service-batiments/logements/en/>
- Other student residences in Geneva (only in French): <https://www.aglae.ch>
- La Ciguë, student housing cooperative: <https://cigue.ch/the-cigue-presented/>
- Facebook groups like « Colocation Genève – La Carte des Colocs » can be very useful when looking for housing (be careful, there could be some scams).

As transportation is efficient around Geneva, you can consider living in another commune around the main city, but check daily transfer possibilities and prices beforehand, using websites such as [Google Maps](#), [SBB](#). **Warning: residing in another canton or in neighboring France might cause complications with your permit or visa.**

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.

## **Banking and taxes**

Upon your arrival in Geneva, you can open a bank account: student accounts are usually free. In most cases, you will need supporting documents such as your passport, your student card, your residence permit (or proof that you have applied for one), and proof of address in Geneva (it can be a sub-lease).

Some banks: [BCGE](#), [PostFinance](#), [UBS](#), [MigrosBank](#), [Credit Suisse](#), [Raiffeisen](#).

Please note that certain banks will refuse to open an account without first seeing your B permit – this is the case of Raiffeisen. Some banks can also ask for an attestation from OCPM stating that your permit is in progress. The requirements differ not only by bank but also by branch, or by the student's nationality.

Banks are very busy opening accounts for students at the beginning of the Fall semester. Consequently, you may need to wait a week or more for an appointment. In general, however, Swiss banks are very “student friendly”, and the checking/savings accounts, internet banking, bank cards, etc. are usually free of charge.

## **Important for American Citizens**

If you are from the United States, some bank branches might require you to schedule a special appointment with a person who handles American accounts because of American laws to prevent tax evaders. It is important when scheduling an appointment to let the bank (especially UBS) know right away that you are American, so that you can have an appointment with the correct person and avoid having to cancel and reschedule. For stays shorter than six months, banks might refuse to open a bank account.

We suggest you contact bank branches around Plainpalais (close to Uni Mail). They will facilitate the opening of a Swiss bank account, but you are free to select any bank of your choice. Please note that this information does not engage in the responsibility of the University of Geneva, check the exact conditions directly with the banks.

## **Reminder: do not forget to close your account before leaving Geneva!**

Even if you earn little to no income in Switzerland during the time of your studies, **you will have to declare your income for taxes**. Once you are registered in your locality, you will very likely receive a letter asking you to fill out your different income sources. For foreigners, this is sometimes done through the employer automatically. This document of the Graduate Institute Student Association might help answer your questions: <https://www.ourgisa.com/tax-guide>.

## Budget

Geneva is an expensive city: plan your budget carefully to ensure you have sufficient financial resources for your stay. Make sure to pay your bills in time: in Switzerland, you can face financial penalties and/or pursuits otherwise.

| Items   | Monthly price   |
|---|---|
| Study costs   | Around CHF 100.- per month (CHF 500.- per semester of UNIGE taxes)  |
| Health and Accident Insurance   | Free with European Health Insurance Card<br>Starting from CHF 64.- without European Health Insurance Card   |
| Liability Insurance (in French:<br><i>Responsabilité civile or RC</i> ) | CHF 10 (from 80 a year, depending on your insurer)  |
| Transportation  | Free for students below 24 years old.<br><br>Students over 25 years old: CHF 70 (monthly) / CHF 500 (annual).<br>See: <a href="https://www(tpg.ch/en/ticket-fares">https://www(tpg.ch/en/ticket-fares</a> |
| Rent  | CHF 700.- (average in student housing), CHF 900.- (average for a room in a shared apartment outside of student housing)   |
| Electricity / telephone / WiFi  | Approx. CHF 120.- (30 for electricity, 40 for WiFi, 50 for mobile phone)  |
| Food  | Approx. CHF 500.-   |
| Clothes/cultural activities/leisure                                     | Approx. CHF 250.-   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>Approx. CHF 1700 to 2200.- per month</b>   |

## Transportation

Geneva has a very good public transportation system. The Geneva Public Transport network is called UNIRESO. It is an interconnected system of trams and buses (TPG), *mouettes* (yellow transport boats) and trains (SBB/CFF) that covers the city of Geneva, the Canton of Geneva, and parts of neighboring Canton of Vaud and France. There are different zones; zone 10 covers “all Geneva” (City and Canton, including some local train rides).

### Public Transportation

**UNIRESO Pass:** For long stays, it is worth purchasing a 1-year zone 10 TPG/UNIRESO pass card (valid for bus, tram, lake boats and train in the whole zone 10). You can buy them at the TPG Office inside Gare Cornavin (office located at the northern entrance) or online. You will need to provide your ID and Geneva address. Subscriptions for people over 25 is CHF 70 monthly/500 yearly.

Transportation is **free for students under 25**, studying or undergoing training in Geneva or nearby areas, subject to approval upon submission of the required proof. For more information: <https://www.tpg.ch/en/purchase/our-offers-and-good-deals/youth-and-oasidi-passes-2025>.

**Single transportation tickets:** the single UNIRESO ticket is valid for buses, trams, lake boats and local trains (including Cornavin-Airport train) within a given zone. The most common ticket is valid for 60 minutes and is transferable (CHF 3). The tickets only cost CHF 2 with the Half-Fare Card (see below). There is also short ride 3-stop tickets (CHF 2). Tickets must be bought at the ticket machines located at every stop and inside some buses going outside of the city or on the SBB Mobile App.

You can also buy a ticket via SMS (works with foreign SIM cards): send an SMS to 788 with text "tpg1" to obtain a 1-hour, transferable ticket (CHF 3) or "tpg2" if you have a Half-Fare Card (see below), before boarding the vehicle. Other codes can be found here: <http://www.tpg.ch/en/web/site-international/sms-ticket>.

**Maps and Schedules** can be found on the TPG website (<https://www.tpg.ch/en/web/site-international>) or the 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

It is quite convenient to go around by bike - but be careful of cars. You can easily find second-hand bikes at affordable prices. Sales are regularly organized by [Pro Velo Genève](#), notably at the beginning of each semester in collaboration with UNIGE (check their Instagram page for more information). Other options include:

- [La Bicyclette Bleue](#) rents bikes from 3 to 12 months at reasonable rates (starting from CHF 50.- for 3 months).
- [Genève Roule](#) rents bikes for a minimum of one day, but for a short hop you can also get a bike any time using the app [Donkey Republic](#) (first hour free).
- The University also organizes a buy and sale of second-hand bikes: <https://www.unige.ch/mobilite/bourses-aux-velos>
- Facebook marketplace is also a good option for finding a second-hand bike.

Wearing a helmet is not compulsory in Geneva, but we strongly recommend wearing one.

## Travelling in Switzerland

**The Swiss Federal Railways (SBB CFF FFS)** is the best way to get around the country, it is usually punctual and efficient. To avoid any confusion, SBB is in their abbreviation in German, CFF in French, and FFS in Italian. Their website (<https://www.sbb.ch/en/home.html>) offers comprehensive information about traveling by train in Switzerland. You can buy tickets online or at any train station. You can also buy tickets through the **CFF mobile app**: (<https://www.sbb.ch/en/timetable/mobile-apps/sbb-mobile.html>). Careful: round-trip tickets purchased with the CFF app are only valid on the day of purchase.

Note: There might be some interesting offers for Swiss travel cards during the black Friday or November Sale. (You can wait until then for amazing discounts for the same)

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

- 1) Swiss Half-Fare Card**, which offers up to 50% discounts on travel by train, bus, boat and most mountain railways, as well as for the use of public transportation in more than 90 towns and cities (Geneva included). The Card costs CHF 120 per year for people under 25, CHF 190 otherwise.
- 2) Swiss Flexi Pass**, which entitles you to unlimited rail, bus and boat travel throughout the Swiss Travel System network during 3, 4, 5 or 6 days of your choice within 1 month.
- 3) 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.
- 4) Saver Day Pass**. Travel throughout Switzerland for a day at reduced costs. Whether on CFF trains or trains of other rail companies, on boats, buses, trams or postbuses. These passes have many advantages for foreigners.
- 5) 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>. Warning: if train tickets in Switzerland are usually valid one day over the same trajectory and distance, **supersaver tickets are only valid for one specific train**.

## Scenic Routes

Visitors often find a scenic train ride as one of the most enjoyable experiences in Switzerland. Glacier Express is a 7,5-hour train ride from Zermatt to Davos / St Moritz via Andermatt ([www.glacierexpress.ch](http://www.glacierexpress.ch)). Golden Pass line extends from Lucerne to Montreux by Lake Geneva via Interlaken ([www.goldenpass.ch](http://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.

## Mobile phone

If your current mobile service does 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, or some tobacco stores can advise you on options). If you plan to use data, Lebara and Galaxus mobile offer inexpensive plans from 14/month for 3GB of data. On [www.yallo.ch](http://www.yallo.ch), you can also obtain cheap sim cards – text to anywhere in Europe for 15 Cents, and call for 22-25cts/minute in most countries. The biggest operators in Switzerland are [Salt](#), [Swisscom](#) and [Sunrise](#).

Note: Please check the contract period before buying the services, as it might be expensive to cancel or stop the contract before its end.

## Food

### Canteens/Cafeterias

Almost all UNIGE buildings have canteens/cafeterias that serve hot meals or sandwiches at preferential prices for students, including vegetarian meals for CHF 5 with a QR-code available on <https://unipass.unige.ch>. That is not the case for the Campus Biotech's canteen.

### 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. The cheapest stores are Lidl, Aldi and Denner; the middle priced are Migros and Coop; the most expensive ones, Manor and Globus.

We encourage students to bring their own shopping bags, and to use as little plastic as possible. For example, not using a plastic bag but sticking the label directly on fruits and vegetables.

The best plastic-free, fresh grocery shopping place is the local farmers' market, such as the one in Plainpalais, open on Tuesdays, Fridays, and Sundays, running from 8am-1pm (longer on Sundays). There is also a market in Champel on Thursdays from 8am-1pm and one in Carouge on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The cheapest vegetable market is l'Union Maraichère in Pâquis (25 rue de la Navigation) or Carouge (16 rue Blavignac), which sells "second-class" veggies at cheaper prices; perfect if you don't mind not having a perfectly regular tomato. 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.).

We also recommend using the [Too Good to Go](#) mobile application to get cheaper meals or groceries that were not sold during the day from restaurants or shops, attempting to reduce food waste.

For students in need the association [La Farce](#) distributes grocery bags for free – after paying a membership fee of CHF 20/year. The student association "Etudiant.e.s pour le Développement Durable" also gives away free vegetables on Fridays from 13h13-14h30 at UniMail.

## 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 on the first Sunday of every month at most city-sponsored museums.

## Swimming

There are several places to access the lake Léman (also known as Lake Geneva) or the river Rhône in Geneva: <https://www.geneve.com/en/explore-the-city/swimming-in-geneva>. Please be careful as the Rhône can have very strong and dangerous currents.

## Safety and Wellbeing

### Medical Services

There are various medical centers 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 has 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 is centrally located on 2, Cours de Rive, and can see you with or without an appointment.  
Phone: +41 22 312 11 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/>

### Psychological support

UNIGE offers psychological services to students. Consultations are charged CHF 25 but can be waived for students with financial difficulties.

Website: <https://www.unige.ch/sse/en/consultations-psychologiques-medicales/consultation-psychologique>  
Phone: +41 22 379 13 33 (reception)

### 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 prohibited, especially sexual harassment. If you have any concern, or if you experience or witness unacceptable behavior, please contact us at: [complaints@sdgsolutionspace.org](mailto:complaints@sdgsolutionspace.org)

**Campus Security can be reached 24/7 at 1222 from an internal phone or 0041 22 379 1222 from a mobile phone.**

## Student affairs

Useful tip: to **find UNIGE buildings and classrooms**, you can consult this map:  
<https://www.unige.ch/presse/plans/>

Most of the MIHDS courses take place in these two buildings:

- Uni Mail, Bd du Pont d'Arve 40, 1205
- SDG Solution Space, Campus Biotech Innovation Park, Avenue de Sécheron 15, 1202 Genève

**The ISIs (Infrastructure des Services d'Identification) account gives students and employees access to UNIGE digital resources.** The UNIGE Admissions Office will send you the details (account name and password) by post, along with the registration fee payment slip, before the beginning of the semester. ORISIS is used by future UNIGE students whose registration process is still underway. You can create your [own ORISIS account here](#).

As a student, you also have a free access to Microsoft Copilot AI.

## Language training

If you want to learn French, you can check the UNIGE Welcome Center page detailing all the different possible services offering French class in Geneva: <https://welc.ch/en/other/french-classes/>. For instance, [L'Université Populaire de Genève UPG](#) is an association that offers courses for smaller budgets.

La [Maison des langues](#), French for 'House of Languages' gives diverse language courses at the University of Geneva, but also offers translation and proofreading services. You can follow semester classes as well as intensive summer classes, for two weeks full time. Subscriptions close once classes are full, so keep an eye on the opening dates.

UNIGE also offers the possibility to join a [Tandem Linguistique](#): by connecting two language partners with complementary language skills, it allows the participant to exchange, learn and practice different foreign languages for free. It's also great to meet people!

## Student associations

Countless student associations can be joined at the University of Geneva, the list can be found there: <https://agora.unige.ch/associations>. During the [Welcome Days](#) (week prior to the start of the academic year, but at the same time as your first MHDS course, in September), many associations gather for a day at the UniMail building to present their activities and meet future members.

The [CUAE](#) (University Conference of Student Associations) is the umbrella association and union of students at the University of Geneva and their spokesperson to university and political authorities: it aims to defend the interests of students while offering several services (hence functions like a union).

Two associations might be of particular interest:

- The Swiss Association of Student Organizations for Sustainability ([VSN-FDD-FSS](#)). Their goal is to "implement sustainability in teaching, research, governance, strategy, the dialog with the public and on campus."
- ESA Association, which gathers many international students who have just arrived in Geneva – it is European, but everyone can join. They organize a lot of events during the academic year, and it is a great opportunity to meet people!

## Sports and other activities

The University of Geneva offers many different sports and cultural activities on campus: 120+ lessons a week! You can find all the information [here for sports](#) and [here for cultural activities](#). The student prices are often very low or even free. Applications open at the start of every semester (exact dates in the description of each activity): keep in mind that the spots for certain activities book quite quickly. Free tickets for cultural events in Geneva are also posted regularly.

## Student card

The Admissions Office will provide you with your student card once your registration has been confirmed. It will either be given to you during an in-person appointment or to be picked up at the [Campus Life information point](#) during opening hours. You will have to update your student card each semester after paying your tuition fees at machines located in different University buildings.

You can use it to print and get the canteen student prices, but also to get discounts outside of the university: libraries often offer a 10% discount to students, as do places hosting cultural activities, including some theaters, museums, or concert halls, upon presentation of your student card.

## Printing

Printing is possible on any of UNIGE's 100 campus printers using the [UniFlow system](#). You can print and photocopy one- or two-sided documents in color or black and white, as well as scan and send documents to your UNIGE email address for free. You need a student account, and you will have some printing credits to use each semester, with the possibility to top-up with the following link: <https://plone.unige.ch/distic/pub/impressions-et-photocopies/systeme-impression-centralise-uniflow/comment-recharger-son-compte-impression>.

## Tuition fees

Fees amount to **CHF 500 per semester** (CHF 65 in fixed fees and CHF 435 in administrative fees), payable in a single installment. Any reduction of administrative fees linked to a change of status, e.g. leave of absence, internship, or doctoral studies, are automatically applied to the amount due. You can also request a fee waiver due to financial difficulties from the [Financial Aid office](#). Payment must be made online, on the [student portal](#) as soon as the registration application has been confirmed each semester: Payment can only be made by one of the following methods: credit card, PostFinance, Paysafecard, or PayPal. Careful, a payment delayed too long results in your expulsion (exmatriculation in French), requiring you to follow a special [re-enrollment procedure](#).

Dual Degree Track: At Tsinghua University, tuition fees **are 120'000 RMB for the master, plus 800 RMB administrative fees**. Scholarship opportunities are available from the [Chinese Scholarship Council](#) and [Tsinghua University](#), covering part of the tuition fees and accommodation on campus. Geneva dual degree students only pay the CHF65 fixed fee while in Beijing.

## Financial aid

If in need of financial aid, you can visit or call the Financial Aid service of the University: <https://vie-de-campus.unige.ch/campus-life/financing-your-studies/financial-aid>. UNIGE and the University of Applied Sciences Geneva (HES-SO) provide help and support through grants, emergency funds, fee waivers and social counseling for students whose income is insufficient.

Different options are possible, depending on the situation:

- Monthly scholarships from UNIGE or from private funds such as the Hans Wilsdorf Foundation.
- Emergency assistance in different forms to help students get out of temporary and unexpected financial difficulties.
- Mobility grants to enable students who could not otherwise afford it to carry out their study project abroad.
- **Tuition fee waivers** for eligible students (CHF 435.- per semester). This is an annual procedure that applies to 2 semesters; therefore, make sure to apply in the first weeks of the fall semester.

More options for financial support are listed on the website of the City of Geneva:

<https://www.geneve.ch/en/public/jeunes/finding-support-sympathetic/receiving-financial-support>

Foreign students should also explore grant opportunities in their home country.

For dual track students, several options can help finance the year in China: the [Chinese Scholarship Council](#), [Tsinghua University](#), the [Association Genève Asie](#), the [Confucius Institute](#) Scholarships or the [Heyning-Roelli Foundation](#). You can contact Giulia Brocco on the matter. More information [here](#).

## Course registration

**Registration for courses/exams is done online via the [student portal](#).** At the beginning of each semester, you will receive an **email at your @etu.unige.ch address** informing you of the opening of the registration portal. From then on, you can log in to your student portal and access the online registration form. This form allows registration for courses at G3S (Facult SdS), as well as the courses given by the other faculties/centers/institutes involved in the MIHDS programme. Registration deadlines are specified on the G3S. **Be careful of registration deadlines. If you forget to register in time, contact the academic advisor in charge of the master as soon as possible.** Please note that you will be charged **CHF 150 for a late registration fee**.

**Warning: registration for courses on Moodle gives you access to practical info and documents useful for following the classes, but it does not serve as official registration.**

When you register for a course, you are automatically signed up for the corresponding exam during the regular exam session held at the end of the semester. No separate registration for exams is necessary. You will also need to register for the credits corresponding to your internship report or master thesis.

**If you have failed one or more courses and wish to retake the exams,** you can register for the exam(s) in the August/September session of the academic year. Registration for exams in the August/September session is done online via the student portal (<https://portail.unige.ch/>). You will receive an email at the beginning of July via your @etu.unige.ch address informing you of the opening of the online registration portal.

### G3S students office:

Uni Mail, Boulevard du Pont-d'Arve 40, 1205 Genève  
Office 3279 (3rd floor)

Phone: +41 (0)22.379.80.00  
secretariat-etudiants-sds@unige.ch  
Opening hours: check on the website

#### **Your academic advisor:**

Ms Yali CHEN  
T. +41 (0)22 379 89 66  
Yali.Chen@unige.ch

#### **Grading system**

UNIGE uses a grading system ranging from 0 to 6 (excellent), with 4.00 being the passing grade for the evaluation. Grades are given in increments of 0.25, for example: 3.75, 4.00, 4.25, 4.50.

[Here is a conversion system to a letter scale \(ECTS scale\)](#), facilitating comparison between European grading systems:

A = Excellent = 5.5, 5.75, 6.00  
B = Very good = 5.00, 5.25  
C = Good = 4.50, 4.75  
D = Satisfactory = 4.25  
E = Sufficient = 4.00  
F = Fail < 4.00

However, some courses are not graded with a numerical value, but rather with a "Pass"/"Fail" evaluation. In such cases, the course is considered passed if you receive a "Yes" evaluation, and failed if you receive a "No" evaluation. These cannot be converted into numerical grade, even if requested by your home University.

#### **Moodle and Mediaserver**

At the University of Geneva, **the Moodle learning platform supports online teaching and learning:** <https://moodle.unige.ch/>.

It will provide access to course materials and other teaching-related activities (such as discussion forums, submission of assignments, collaborative work, assignment feedback, etc.) posted and updated by the teachers. The platform is complemented by an ipad and smartphone app.

You can enroll on Moodle once you have a student ID (but you sign in to moodle with your Switch edu-ID account, which you can create once you have your UNIGE credentials). You can then subscribe to the different courses followed. It is important to enroll on Moodle, as **communications are often made through the platform and only sent to email addresses of subscribers of the corresponding course.**

Reminder: **enrolling in a Moodle course space does not replace the administrative registration for that course and its exams!**

**Mediaserver** is a platform that allows you to access recordings of classes , as well as of conferences and other events. Please note that not all teachers choose to have their classes recorded, hence you will not be able to find all of your courses there. It is a a very useful resource all the same: <https://mediaserver.unige.ch/>

You can find more information on UNIGE's tools [here](#).

## Library

**The library of the University extends on several locations of the campus**, all of which you can find on this map: <https://www.unige.ch/biblio/en/infos/locations/map/>. The different contents (books or other sources) often match the building in question (for example, the library in the Institute for Environmental Sciences building will mostly have items related to the environment). **To borrow from the library, you will first need your SWITCH EDU-ID account and to register on their website**. Your multi-service student card will then also be your library card.

Documents not returned on time generate overdue fees of CHF 5 or 10 that increase with each late return reminder.

The library also offers [training sessions](#) in order to help you acquire information literacy skills such as how to use Zotero or specialized literature research tools.

**[Swisscovery](#) is a great tool to search for sources** that you are interested in: it gathers all partner libraries in Switzerland and allows you to know where, how and when you can access a source. It contains books, articles, book chapters, journals, thesis, films and more. You can type a specific title, author or key words and it will indicate to which university has the source in open access or in which library you can go pick it up. If needed, there's also the possibility of getting a book sent from one library to another that you can visit more practically.

## MIHDS Study Plan(s)

During the year of coursework in Geneva, students will explore numerous dimensions of innovation, human development and sustainability, often involving international organizations and their strategic activities for the SDGs. Scholars working at the UN, for global NGOs and in federal or local administrations are strongly involved in the program. Hands-on and team-based interdisciplinary projects throughout the teaching program involve mentorship from experts in International Geneva. This Master's proposes diverse and innovative forms of teaching: personal work, group work, flipped classrooms, challenged-based learning, hackathons, practical workshops, fieldwork, and many more.

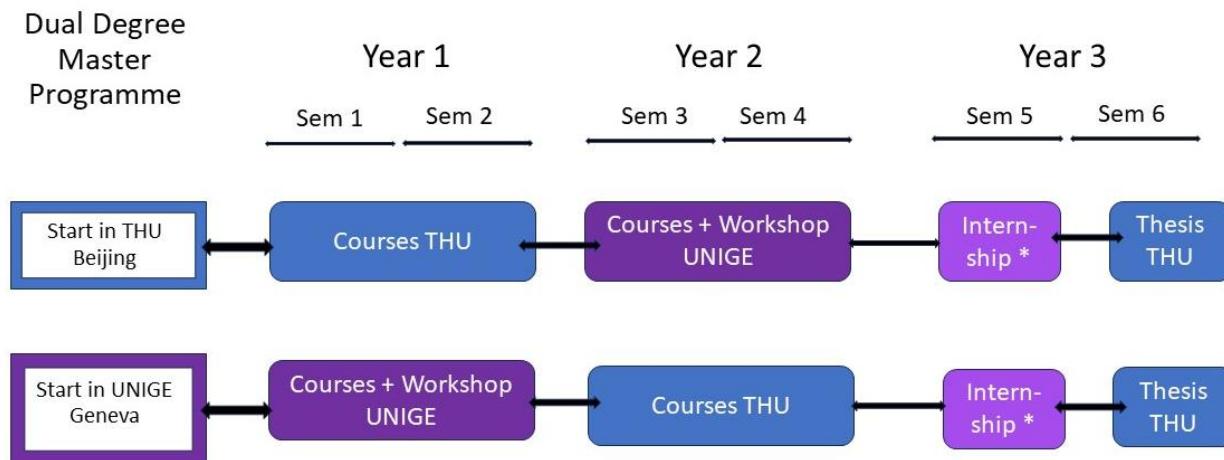
**Two tracks:** students can choose between two tracks, a Dual Degree (with Tsinghua University) or a Single Degree.

### Dual Degree track

This track combines the IHDS interdisciplinary M.Sc. program at the Geneva School of Social Sciences with a Master of Science in Management Science (called MPP-SDG) program at the School of Public Policy and Management, Tsinghua University. Students enroll in both universities and spend one year in each university. In addition, students must complete a master thesis with THU, and an internship report or group work with UNIGE, usually involving an international organization or NGO in Geneva. Students obtain two degrees after a minimum of two and a half years of study. Students start the Dual Degree track at the university where they first register.

**Please note that even though it is legally possible to do your dual track in five semesters, most students take 6 semesters for this.** Otherwise, the workload during the Geneva year is very heavy.

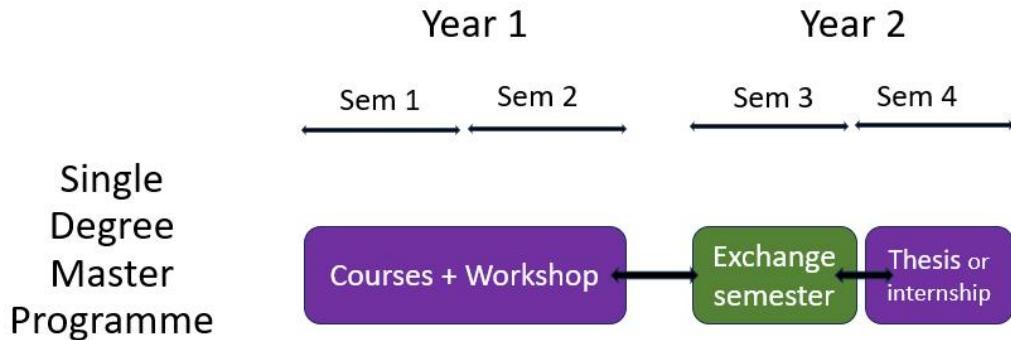
You can find more details on Tsinghua at the [link to the SDG Dual Degree Track at Tsinghua University \("MPP-SDG"\)](#).



**Internship \*** requires a workload which makes difficult to do them while following IHDS courses and workshop during the same semester. An additional semester (sem 5) is highly recommended. The internship can take place anywhere in the world as long as the topic and the partner institution are validated by the IHDS direction.

## Single Degree track

Students who follow the Single Degree track obtain one degree from the University of Geneva: the Master of Science in Innovation, Human Development and Sustainability. They spend 1 year in Geneva and 1 semester at a partner university. The master's thesis or the internship-based thesis is supervised by a UNIGE professor, but can be based on an internship or fieldwork elsewhere.



## Study plan

The total requirement of the Single Degree track is equivalent to **120 credits based on the ECTS system**, where **1 credit represents a student investment of 25-30 hours**. This includes **courses you will take during one semester in a partner university for the Single degree track (30 credits)** nor the ones taken during two semesters in Tsinghua University (3rd and 4th of the program) for the Dual degree track.

You can find information on the study plan and each course (as the semester, the frequency, the dates, etc. here: <https://pgc.unige.ch/main/teachings>, as well as the details of each specialization).

Please note that you have to choose your specialization when you enroll for Fall classes at the latest, as each specialization includes a prerequisite course that is only offered in Fall.

## Specializations

Within the MIHDS, three specializations allow the students to dive deeper into a specific topic, and specialize according to their interests and future professional, academic or personal ambitions.

- Sustainable Human Development
- Sustainable consumption, production and organizations
- Future cities and regions

You can find information on classes included in these specializations and their content in the study plan listed above.

## Internships

Internships are mandatory for Dual Degree track students and optional for Single Degree track students. The SDG Internship Programme facilitate the placements, which provide students with valuable practical experience, generally for a duration of three months full-time or the equivalent in part-time. The internship experience culminates in either an internship report for dual track students or an internship-based thesis for single track students, with the possibility of working in groups of up to four students. Exploring the opportunities of sustainability-focused professional fields, the Programme aims at blending academic learning with real-world applications.

Throughout the internship and their report or thesis, students or groups of students must be accompanied by both an academic supervisor (who is a MIHDS instructor) and an internship supervisor within the organization where the internship is conducted.

**You can find more information about the internships on a dedicated moodle site called “IHDS Master Programme: Information Page” (see above on how to subscribe to a moodle site). There you find internships opportunities as well as key documents such as the internship agreement template, the internship charter and an internship time calculator.** Susana Perdiz is in charge of the SDG Internship Programme. When searching for an internship, carefully consider deadlines, as well as the difficulty of joining international organizations’ internship programs.

**Check the paragraph on residence permits of this document and do not forget announce your internship to the OCPM.**

## Exchange Semester for Single Degree

Single Degree track students spend the third semester on exchange at a partner university. More information can be found on the IHDS Master Programme: Information Page on Moodle.

Please note that courses that are available and that might correspond to your curriculum will solely depend on the host university, sometimes from the specific faculty you are enrolled in during your exchange: hence, you should check which classes are available in the host university and if you can/will be able to enroll in them before applying.

Language requirements might vary from university to university as well as from class to class.

## Thesis / Internship Report

**Students must write an internship report or thesis as part of their curriculum**, which is worth 24 ECTS. The following table shows the different types and how they align with the single and dual tracks.

Single track students can either submit an internship-based thesis (based on the internship experience) or an academic thesis; dual track students have to submit an internship report. These have different lengths and regulations that can be found in the [IHDS Guidelines for internship reports, academic and internship-based theses, and their evaluation](#).

|                         | Single track   |      | Dual track      |                 |
|-------------------------|----------------|------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                         | individual     | team | individual      | team            |
| Academic thesis         | X              | X    | NA <sup>a</sup> | NA <sup>a</sup> |
| Internship-based thesis | X <sup>b</sup> | X    | NA <sup>c</sup> | NA <sup>c</sup> |
| Internship report       | NA             | NA   | X <sup>b</sup>  | X               |

<sup>a</sup> An academic thesis is elaborated at Tsinghua University

<sup>b</sup> Consult the respective guidelines for information on how the GTI Summer School can be accounted for.

<sup>c</sup> The term “thesis” is reserved for use in the single track at UNIGE and the dual track at THU