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Master in Innovation, Human Development and Sustainability Handbook

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Contents

Introduction	3
Practicalities	4
Visa	4
Residence Permit	4
Work	5
Health and accident insurance	6
Accommodation	6
Banking and taxes	7
Budget	8
Transportation	8
Public Transportation	9
Bikes	9
Travelling in Switzerland	10
Scenic Routes	10
Mobile phone	10
Food	11
Canteens/Cafeterias	11
Grocery shopping	11
Shopping and Going Out	11
Swimming	11
Safety and Wellbeing	12
Medical Services	12
Emergencies	12
Code of Conduct	12
Student affairs	13
Language training	13
Student associations	13
Sports and other activities	14
Student card	14
Printing	14
Tuition fees	14
Financial aid	15
Course registration	15
Grading system	16
Moodle and Mediaserver	17
Library	17

MIHDS Study Plan	18
Dual Degree Track	18
Single Degree track	19
Study plan	19
Specializations	19
Internships	20
Exchange Semester for Single Degree Track students	21
Thesis / Internship Report	21

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 master's 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 at 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:

- The Dual Degree Track is an intercultural and inter-academic 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 insights into how major sustainable development issues are addressed in the country with the world's largest economy. Candidates can apply to start the dual degree at UNIGE (for non-Chinese nationals only) or THU. 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” after completing two semesters of coursework and a master's thesis. At UNIGE, they obtain a “Master in Innovation, Human Development and Sustainability” after completing two semesters of coursework and an internship with an internship report (equivalent of a master's thesis).
- The Single Degree Track involves two semesters of coursework 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.

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](#)

Practicalities

Visa

Depending on your nationality, you may need a visa to enter Switzerland and study in Geneva. **Since it can take up to 3 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 takes around one month. 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 to the MIHDS, 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: inquire at the Swiss Embassy in 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. 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 provide the following documents: student attestation; 1 passport photo; copy of your passport; proof of financial means or official notification of your scholarship. Residence permit fees for European citizens: CHF 65.-
- Non-Europeans must provide the following documentation: student attestation; copy of your passport; UNIGE student card; copy of your rental agreement or written statement of landlord (with copy of main rental contract or of landlord's ID); financial guaranties or form O only if you have a family member guarantor who lives in CH. Residence permit fees for non-European citizens: about CHF 250.-
- Swiss citizens from a canton other than Geneva should announce their arrival to the OCPM in the following 14 days. They should provide 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 residents outside Geneva: CHF 50.-

Cantonal Office for Population and Migration:

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

Opening hours: Mon-Fri: 7:30-16:30 (may change without notice)

Please be aware that not all employees speak English. We recommend having a French-speaking person assist you during the procedure.

In case you find an accommodation outside the Canton of Geneva (for example in the Canton of Vaud), you will need to apply for a residence permit at the respective immigration authority. Before considering living in France, review the permit conditions carefully (e.g., non-EU students are not authorized to be a resident in France).

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. EU/EFTA students can start their internship once the form is submitted; non-EU/non-EFTA students must wait for the OCPM to approve the internship.

When you leave Geneva for more than 6 months or indefinitely, do not forget to inform the OCPM.

Work

Warning: Students with EU 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. Please note that while internships are considered as "work", this six-month waiting period does not apply to the intra-curriculum internship that you may need to complete as part of your studies (mandatory for Dual Degree Track students, optional for Single Degree Track students).

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

More information is available from UNIGE's Career Center: <https://vie-de-campus.unige.ch/develop-your-skills/employability/working-during-your-studies>. On the 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.

Health and accident insurance

Health insurance is **compulsory for everyone residing in Switzerland 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 the 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 so, make sure to send the required documents and the form to the Cantonal Health Insurance Service (SAM - Service cantonal de l'assurance maladie).

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

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 an eye on any updates and apply as soon as possible, ideally 3 months before the beginning of classes. Be aware that housing in Geneva is highly competitive, so it is strongly recommended that you also explore the options below.

In addition, you may be able to **sublet from current MIHDS students** who will spend 1-2 semesters abroad. A group chat including both cohorts will be created by the current cohort representatives, where students can share housing availability.

Other possibilities include:

- UNIGE Accommodation Office: <https://www.unige.ch/batiment/service-batiments/logements/en/>
And <https://www.unige.ch/batiment/campus-durable/logements/logements-privés>
- 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 » and whatsapp groups (Geneva rents, flats, and subleases) 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 a proof of address in Geneva (it can be a sublease).

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 may also ask for a proof from the OCPM stating that your permit is in progress. Requirements vary depending on the bank, the branch, and 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 “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 may 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.

We suggest you contact banks around Plainpalais, the square near UNIGE's Uni Mail building. 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 is provided for reference only, and the University of Geneva assumes no liability; 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**. You will very likely receive a postal letter asking you to declare your different income sources. 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. **In the context of visa applications**, we recommend that you have proof of an equivalent of CHF 25'000.- per year. 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 Starting from CHF 64.- without European Health Insurance Card
Liability Insurance (in French: <i>Responsabilité civile or RC</i>)	CHF 10.- (from 80 a year, depending on your insurer)
Transportation	Free for students up to the age of 24 (inclusive) Students over 25: CHF 70.- (monthly) / CHF 500.- (annual). Some students may choose to purchase a bike instead of a transport pass.
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.-
TOTAL	Approx. CHF 1'700.- to CHF 2'200.- per month

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 (valid for buses, trams, lake boats, and trains in the whole zone 10). You can buy them at the TPG Office inside Geneva's main train station (called Gare Cornavin) or online. You will need to provide your ID and Geneva address. Subscriptions for people over 25 are CHF 70.- monthly and CHF 500.- yearly.

Transportation is free for people up to the age of 24, residing and/or training in the canton of Geneva. This is 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 fare 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 a short ride 3-stop ticket (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 convenient to go around by bike - but be careful of cars. Whether you are a cycling enthusiast or need a helping hand to get around, there are many options:

Buy a bike: 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).
- Facebook marketplace or Péclet 13 are good options for finding a second-hand bike.
- The University also organizes second-hand bike sales: <https://www.unige.ch/mobilite/bourses-aux-velos>

Rent a bike:

- Long-term rentals: [La Bicyclette Bleue](#) rents bikes from 3 to 12 months at reasonable rates (starting from CHF 50.- for 3 months).
- Short-term rentals: [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).

For repairing your bike at great prices, we strongly recommend *Péclet 13*. You can also visit the Unicycle association on Mondays and Thursdays from 12:00-13:45.

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 the 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 discounts for Swiss travel cards during the black Friday or November Sale.

Trains can be very pricey in Switzerland. To overcome this, visit 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 among the most enjoyable experiences in Switzerland. The Glacier Express is a 7.5-hour train ride from Zermatt to Davos / St Moritz via Andermatt (www.glacierexpress.ch). The Golden Pass line extends from Lucerne to Montreux by Lake Geneva via Interlaken (www.goldenpass.ch). Other popular routes include the Bernina Express and the Chocolate Train. Please note that 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, you can also obtain cheap sim cards – text to anywhere in Europe for 15 Cents, and call for 22-25 cts/minute in most countries. The biggest operators in Switzerland are [Salt](#), [Swisscom](#) and [Sunrise](#).

Note: Check the contract period before buying a service, as it can be expensive to cancel or stop a contract before its end.

Food

Canteens/Cafeterias

Almost all UNIGE buildings have canteens/caferterias 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, which is the nearest option to the SDG Solution Space.

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 options 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 place for plastic-free and fresh food is the local farmers' markets, such as the one in Plainpalais, open on Tuesdays, Fridays, and Sundays, running from 8:00-13:00 (longer on Sundays). There is also a market in Champel on Thursdays from 8:00-13:00 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).

We also recommend using the mobile application [Too Good to Go](#) 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 (EDD)” also gives away free vegetables on Fridays from 13:15-14:30 at Uni Mail (Parc Baud-Bovy).

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/>

UNIGE also offers medical consultations, on campus, at the hospital, or remotely. Consultations at the university are free of charge and appointments can be made online through your student account. Detailed information can be found here: <https://www.unige.ch/sse/en/consultations-psychologiques-medicales/consultation-health>.

Psychological support

UNIGE offers psychological services to students. Consultations cost 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 concerns, or if you experience or witness unacceptable behavior, please contact: 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, 48 hours after the enrolment procedure is completed in person. ORISIS is used by future UNIGE students whose registration process is still underway. You can create your [own ORISIS account here](#).

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 UNIGE, 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.

Student associations

Countless student associations can be joined at UNIGE, the list can be found here: <https://agora.unige.ch/associations>. During the [Welcome Days](#), many associations gather for a day at the Uni Mail 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 UNIGE 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).

Three associations might be of particular interest:

- IHDS Student Association (IHDS-ADE), which was created by IHDS students in 2025, whose aims are to support student engagement, well-being, and representation; to foster community and networking; and to promote sustainability and innovation.
- [Etudiant.e.s pour le Développement Durable](#), which goal is to raise awareness and make UNIGE more sustainable through various initiatives (ie. sustainability week, university garden, DIY workshops).

- Erasmus Student Network 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

UNIGE 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](#).** Student prices are often very low, and some activities are even free. Applications open at the start of every semester: keep in mind that places for some activities fill up 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](#) of Uni Dufour during opening hours. You will have to update your student card each semester after paying your tuition fees at machines located in different UNIGE 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>.

Specialized printing services (posters, flyers, postcards, brochures, etc.) are available from [the Centre d'Impression](#) at Uni Mail.

Tuition fees

Fees amount to CHF 435.- for the first semester and then **CHF 500.- per semester** (CHF 65.- in fixed fees and CHF 435.- in administrative fees), payable in a single installment. 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. **Delayed payment may result in expulsion** (known as *exmatriculation* in French), requiring you to follow a special [re-enrollment procedure](#).

You can also request a fee waiver due to financial difficulties from the [Financial Aid office](#). Requests should be submitted during the first weeks of classes in September, with exemptions typically granted around November. Once approved, the waiver will automatically be applied in subsequent semesters.

For Single Degree Track: Tuitions fees during the semester abroad are CHF 65.-. No fees are required from the partner university for the exchange semester.

For Dual Degree Track: At Tsinghua University, tuition fees are 120'000 RMB for all three semesters, plus 8'000 RMB of administrative fees. Students can pay in two instalments: 60'000 RMB in the first semester and 60'000 RMB in the third. Dual degree students starting in Geneva pay the UNIGE CHF 65.- per semester fee while in Beijing for their second year, as well as the semester during which they defend the Tsinghua University thesis; dual degree students starting at Tsinghua University pay the UNIGE CHF 65.- per semester for the semester during which they defend their Tsinghua University thesis (after the two semesters at UNIGE). Scholarship opportunities are available from the [Chinese Scholarship Council](#) and [Tsinghua University](#), covering part of the tuition fees and accommodation on campus.

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 to help students get out of temporary and unexpected financial difficulties.
- Mobility grants to enable students who could not otherwise afford to carry out their study project abroad.
- Tuition fee waivers for eligible students (CHF 435.- per 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 degree 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 from the Student Secretariat (secretariat-etudiants-sds@unige.ch) 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, as well as the courses given by the other faculties/centers/institutes involved in the MIHDS programme.

Registration must be completed within the first weeks of the start of the semester. Once registration opens, students must meet the deadline specified in the email sent by the Student Secretariat. Be mindful of registration deadlines. If you miss the deadline, contact the academic advisor in charge as soon as possible. Registration is final and you cannot withdraw from a registered course.

When you register for a course, you are automatically signed up for the corresponding written or oral exam during the regular exam session held at the end of the semester. However, most master's courses do not have such exams but base their evaluation on presentations during the last course session(s) and/or term papers instead.

You do not need to register for the 24 ECTS of your thesis or internship report, as registration is done automatically and retroactively when the academic supervisor submits the grade to the Student Secretariat after a successful defense.

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.

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 Student Secretariat:

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

Phone: +41 (0)22 379 89 66

Yali.Chen@unige.ch

Grading system

UNIGE uses a grading system ranging from 6.00 to 0, with 4.00 representing a passing grade. Grades are given in increments of 0.25, for example: 3.75, 4.00, 4.25, 4.50.

Below is the conversion to the letter system ranging from A to F (known as the ECTS scale), facilitating comparison between European grading systems:

A = Excellent = 5.25, 5.5, 5.75, 6.00

B = Very good = 4.75, 5.00

C = Good = 4.50

D = Satisfactory = 4.25

E = Pass = 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 grades, 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/>. Moodle provides access to course materials and other teaching-related content posted and updated by instructors. It is important to enroll on Moodle for each course, as assignments are submitted through the platform. Be aware that course communications are sent exclusively to the email addresses of enrolled students. For this reason, make sure to check your @etu.unige.ch address on a daily basis.

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). The platform is complemented by an iPad and smartphone app. You can then subscribe to the different courses followed.

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

Mediaserver is a platform that gives you access to class recordings, as well as to conferences and other events. Please note that not all instructors choose to record their classes, so not all courses will be available on the platform. It is a useful resource all the same: <https://mediaserver.unige.ch/>

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

Library

The UNIGE library has several locations across campus, all of which you can find on this map: <https://www.unige.ch/biblio/en/infos/locations/map/>. Their resources 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](#) to help you acquire information literacy skills such as how to use Zotero or specialized literature research tools.

Swisscovery is a useful tool for searching academic sources: it aggregates all partner libraries in Switzerland and indicates where and how you can access a given source. It includes books, articles, book chapters, journals, theses, films, and more. You can search by title, author, or keyword, and the platform will indicate whether a source is available in open access or in which library it can be consulted. If needed, you can also request that a book be transferred from one library to a more convenient one.

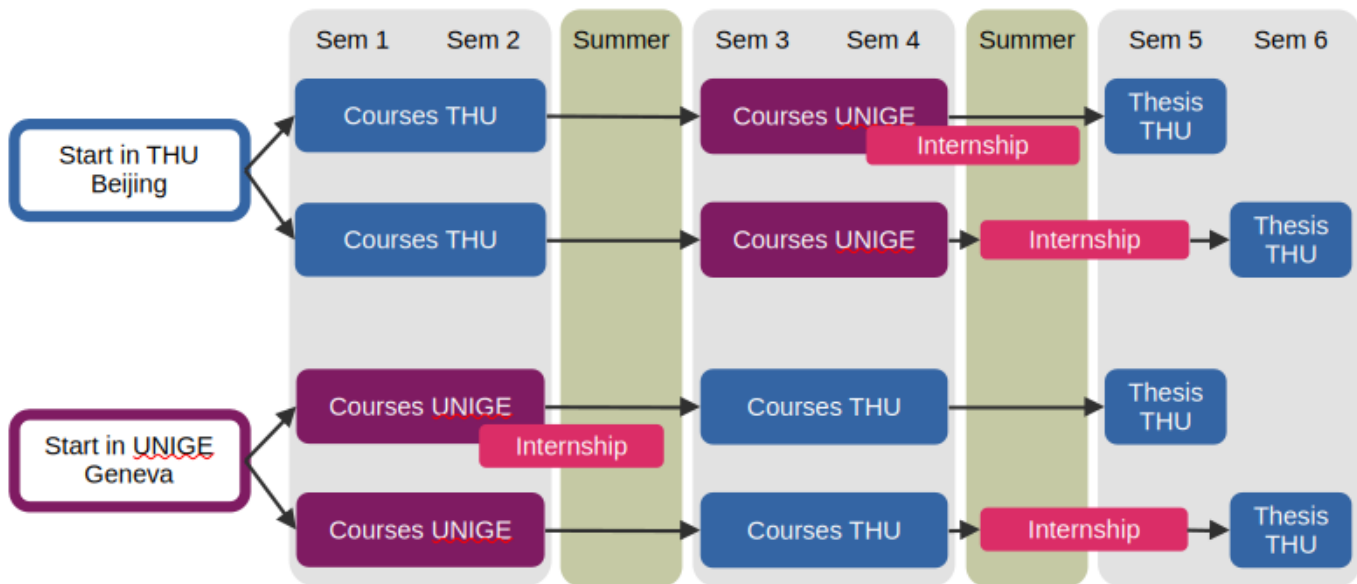
MIHDS Study Plan

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 Track (one degree each from UNIGE and from Tsinghua University) or a Single Degree Track (one degree from UNIGE).

Dual Degree Track

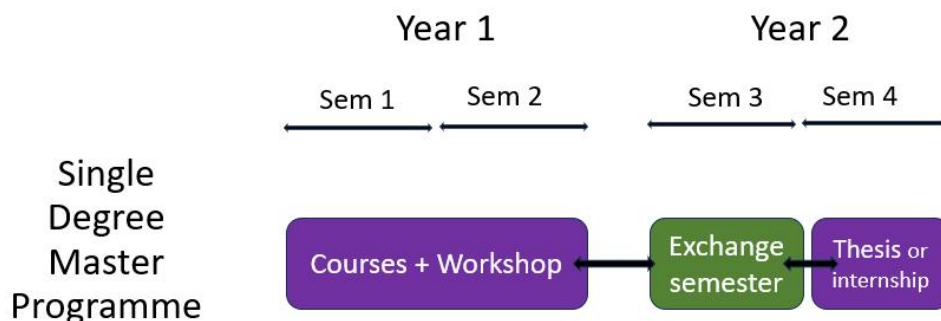
This track combines the IHDS interdisciplinary program at UNIGE with a Master of Science in Management Science program at the School of Public Policy and Management, Tsinghua University. Students enroll in both universities and spend one year in each university. In addition, students must complete a master’s thesis at THU, and an internship report at 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; while completing the dual degree program in five semesters is possible, most students choose to do it in 6 to leave enough time for the internship. Students start the Dual Degree Track at the university where they apply and are accepted.



Please note: Internships are time-intensive and require either 3 months full-time or the equivalent in part-time work (480 hours total). During the semester, while courses are in session, students may intern for a maximum of 40% time.

Single Degree track

Students who follow the Single Degree track obtain a degree from the University of Geneva: the Master of Science in Innovation, Human Development and Sustainability. They complete 2 semesters of course work at UNIGE and 1 semester at a partner university. Work on the master's thesis begins in semester 4. It can evolve around an internship (in Geneva or elsewhere) under the joint supervision of an academic and internship supervisor, or take the form of an academic thesis; the large majority of students pursue an internship-based thesis.



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**. Generally, courses are worth 6 ECTS and workshops are worth 12 ECTS. The credit structure is the following:

- Compulsory core courses (48 ECTS): 1 introductory course, 1 workshop, 1 methodology class, and an academic or internship-based master's thesis (24 ECTS)
- General elective courses (12 ECTS) to choose from 19 courses
- Compulsory specialization courses (18 ECTS): 1 prerequisite course and 1 workshop
- Elective specialization courses (12 ECTS): select 2 courses from a list of 3
- Exchange semester (30 ECTS) for Single Track students

During the two first semesters, students **must obtain at least 30 credits**, or else they will be withdrawn from the Master's program. **You can find information on the study plan and each course (such as the semester, the frequency, the dates, etc.), here: <https://pgc.unige.ch/main/teachings>**. To find the MIHDS study plan, select "Faculté > Faculté des sciences de la société" from the Facultés/Centres/Instituts dropdown menu, then go to the "Plan d'études" tab and select "Maîtrise universitaire" from the Niveau d'études dropdown menu, then find the Master of Science in Innovation, Human Development and Sustainability in the list.

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.* The Sustainable Human Development specialization equips students to design innovative, SDG-aligned solutions to the world's most pressing sustainability challenges. Through active, hands-on learning that integrates social, economic, and environmental sciences alongside AI, students develop practical, scalable interventions addressing diverse challenges - from community development and public health to food systems, energy access, climate change, and biodiversity loss.
- *Sustainable consumption, production and organizations.* The Sustainable Consumption, Production and Organization specialization explores how citizens, businesses, organizations, and societies can accelerate sustainability transitions. Through applied research, ethnographic methods, real-world case studies, and engagement with practitioners, students investigate opportunities for more sustainable consumption, corporate responsibility, just global supply chains, and positive organizational change in order to address the complex environmental and social challenges of our times.
- *Future cities and regions.* The Future Cities and Regions specialization prepares students to understand and shape sustainable, inclusive, and resilient urban futures. Combining urban planning, spatial justice, policy analysis, digital tools, and field-based learning, students examine how cities and regions respond to climate change, inequality, resource pressures, and technological transformation across diverse global contexts.

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

Internships

Internships are mandatory for Dual Degree track students and optional for Single Degree track students. The SDG Internship Programme facilitates 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 an applied research report that responds to academic standards, called “internship report” for Dual Degree Track students and “internship-based thesis” for Single Degree Track students. Exploring the opportunities of sustainability-focused professional fields, the Programme aims at blending the application of academic learning with real-world situations.

Throughout their internship and their report or thesis writing process students are accompanied by an academic supervisor (who is a MIHDS instructor) and an internship supervisor within the organization where the internship is conducted.

Information about internships opportunities is on the Moodle page of the SDG Internship Programme.

Susana Perdiz oversees the SDG Internship Programme. When looking for an internship, carefully consider deadlines, as well as the difficulty of joining international organizations’ internship programs.

The internship agreement template, the internship charter, and an internship time calculator can be found on the IHDS Master Programme Information Page on Moodle.

Do not forget announcing your internship to the OCPM – non-EU students must obtain OCPM approval prior to starting an internship.

Exchange Semester for Single Degree Track students

The exchange semester is **mandatory**. Single Degree track students complete their 3rd semester at a partner university. The programme has secured partnerships with universities around the world, with places reserved for MIHDS students. These universities will be given preference over places at universities without an explicit MIHDS quota. Due to the limited number of places per partner university, the exchange semester placement is subject to a competitive process. The final decision is taken by UNIGE's academic mobility team.

Please note that course availability depends on the host university, and sometimes on the specific faculty you are enrolled in during your exchange. Before submitting your application, we strongly encourage you to check which courses are available and whether you will be able to enroll in them. During the exchange semester, students must complete 30 ECTS credits, which cannot be substituted by an internship or offset against extra credits earned in Geneva.

Language requirements may vary from university to university and from course to course. More information can be found on the IHDS Master Programme Information Page on Moodle.

Timeline:

- September: introductory presentation
- Mid-October: in-depth discussion about destinations and procedures
- November: application deadline
- End of January: release destination for non-eu destinations
- End of February: release destination for european universities
- April: university application
- May: visa application
- August/September: exchange semester begins

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 degree track		Dual degree track	
	individual	team	individual	team
Academic thesis	yes	yes	no ^a	no ^a
Internship-based thesis	yes	yes	no ^b	no ^b
Internship report	no	no	yes	yes

^a An academic thesis is elaborated at Tsinghua University

^b The term “thesis” is reserved for use in the single degree track at UNIGE and the dual degree track at THU

Single track students can either submit an internship-based thesis 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](#).