

# HANDBOOK FOR EXCHANGE STUDENTS

A guide to help students prepare for their exchange at the University of Neuchâtel



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## **1. General information**

### **2. Switzerland and Neuchâtel**

Switzerland, a multilingual country in the heart of Europe, is known for its high-quality academic programmes. The University of Neuchâtel (UniNE) is located in the French-speaking part of the country, in a city that enjoys a central location: half an hour by train from the federal capital, Bern, and just over an hour from the economic capital of Zürich and the international city of Geneva.

Nestled at the foot of the Jura mountains, Neuchâtel faces the lake and offers a magnificent view of the Alps. The landscape, climate, culture and social life are all factors that make the area of Neuchâtel, with around 90,000 people, so attractive.

#### **i. The UNINE in a nutshell**

- Open to the world, with study programmes organized according to the Bologna system, and with a wide range of nationalities among teaching staff and students.
- Carefully supervised by internationally renowned professors, assistants and skilled academic advisors.
- A modestly sized institution, where people can get to know one another and exchange knowledge.
- A promoter of research, providing opportunities to work closely with doctoral students and researchers.
- In tune with the needs of society by offering education to meet current and future needs.
- Interdisciplinary, promoting multiple visions and knowledge-sharing.
- A provider of numerous effective services, such as housing, computer services, career and language centres, sports and cultural activities.

#### **ii. In figures**

4 faculties (Humanities, Science, Law, Economics and Business)

24% of students are of foreign origin

CHF 140.3 million (budget)

4'500 students

633 PhD students

### **3. Exchange programmes**

The UniNE has more than a hundred cooperation agreements with universities around the world, and welcomes over a hundred exchange students every year, in a range of different courses on offer.

Student exchanges take place:

within the framework of the Swiss-European Mobility Programme (Swiss measures for Erasmus+);

- within the framework of the Programme d'échange d'étudiants des établissements universitaires du Québec;

- within the framework of the exchange agreements (conventions) signed by the University of Neuchâtel and its partners.

Students from universities with which UniNE has not signed any formal partnership are also welcome as free mobility students.

## 4. Languages

### iii. Language of instruction

Courses are taught in French at Bachelor's level, with the exception for the Bachelor of Science in Economics and Business which offers courses in English in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year.

French remains the main language of instruction at Master's level. However, English and German are also used in some courses or even in full programmes.

Programmes in English: <https://www.unine.ch/formations/masters-in-english/>

Syllabus: <http://www10.unine.ch/descriptifs/>

### iv. Language requirements

- If students will be taking courses taught in **French**, they must prove that they have a **B2 level** as defined by the [Council of Europe](#). This does not apply if French is their mother tongue or if they have been following a study programme taught entirely in French for at least two years (in this case, they must provide us with a certificate from their home university).
- If they will only be taking French courses from the B.A. pilier français langue, they will need to prove that they have a **B1 level** in French as defined by the [Council of Europe](#)
- If they will be taking courses from the M.A. en lettres et sciences humaines, pilier français langue étrangère, they will need to prove that you have **C1 level** in French as defined by the [Council of Europe](#).
- If they will only be taking courses taught in English, they must prove that you have a **B2 level** as defined by the [Council of Europe](#). This does not apply if English is their mother tongue or if they have been following a study programme taught entirely in English for at least two years (in this case, they provide us with a certificate from their home university). NB: Knowledge of French is not required but is strongly recommended to facilitate daily life.

### v. Learning French

In addition to offering full- and part-time programmes, the Institute of French Language and Culture offers free French lessons of two hours per week to non-French speaking students at A1 to C1 levels, with a language laboratory and exercises in German-to-French and English-to-French translation.

Link: <https://www.unine.ch/ilcf/formations/>

### vi. Learning other languages

The Language Centre offers courses in English and German, as well as multimedia independent learning language programs (in English, German, Italian and Spanish) and bilingual tandem arrangements.

Link: <https://intranet.unine.ch/sacad/centre-de-langues/>

## 5. Welcome programmes

The welcome days take place a few days preceding the beginning of the autumn or spring semester. The Neuchâtel section of the Erasmus Student Network organizes activities during these welcome programmes, as well as during the semester.

Welcome days offer opportunities to visit the faculties and the city, as well as social events.

## 6. Important dates and deadlines

	<b>Autumn semester</b>	<b>Spring semester</b>
Lecture period	Weeks 38-51	Weeks 8-22
Exams	Weeks 2-6	Weeks 23-25
Registration for courses	Weeks 38-41	Weeks 8-11
Registration for exams	Weeks 46-47	Weeks 15-16
Exam results	Week 6	Week 26

More information on <https://www.unine.ch/etudier/s-informer/calendrier-universitaire/>

## 7. Your studies

### 8. Our credit system

ECTS – European credit transfer system  
1 ECTS = 25-30 workload hours  
Bachelor = 180 ECTS  
Master = 90 or 120 ECTS

#### vii. Choose your courses

To create a learning agreement, students should refer to the syllabus (“Descriptif des cours”).

Link: <http://www10.unine.ch/descriptifs/>

and consult the User’s Guide.

Link: <https://www.unine.ch/mobilite/en/incoming-students/choose-your-courses/>

Incoming students are requested to take a minimum of **20 ECTS/semester**.

They are allowed to take a proportion of their courses (20%) in another faculty or field of study. There may be prerequisites at Master’s level, to be verified by the relevant faculties.

Courses are taught in French at Bachelor’s level, with the exception for the BSc in Economics and Business which offers courses in English in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year.

Some Masters are totally or partially taught in English.

Link: <https://www.unine.ch/formations/masters-in-english/>

#### viii. Exams

Registration for exams is mandatory. See *Important Dates and Deadlines*, above.

Exams take place after the lecture period.

- in January–February
- in June

Students who failed exams can retake them during the August-September remedial session (weeks 34-36, registration in week 27).

Exchange students who wish to **sit their exams in advance** can apply to the faculty secretariat at the very beginning of the semester. They must be aware that, depending on the Faculty, the professor and the course, **the request will not necessarily be accepted.**

#### ix. Grading scale

Grade	Standard	
	In French	In English
6	excellent	excellent
5 1/2	très bien	very good
5	bien	good
4 1/2	satisfaisant	satisfactory
4	passable	pass
3 1/2 (and less)	insuffisant	fail

#### x. Academic transcripts

Academic transcripts are available on students' IS-Academia accounts on the day the results are issued (see *Important Dates and Deadlines*, above). Students must send them to their home university themselves, as the UniNE will not do so.

### 9. Practical information

#### xi. Accommodation

The University of Neuchâtel is located in the heart of the city and has no campus in the strict sense of the word.

Students live either in residences, homestay arrangements or shared apartments; they can also register for the Appart-Âges programme, which aims to create links between generations.

The Neuchâtel region is relatively unaffected by the problems of accommodation accessibility experienced elsewhere in Switzerland.

Every effort is made to secure as much accommodation as possible. We recommend that you find accommodation before the academic year begins, and urge you to begin looking as soon as possible.

The average cost of a room or a studio varies from CHF 420.00 to CHF 900.00 per month.

Link: <https://www.unine.ch/mobilite/en/incoming-students/accommodation/>

**xii. Budget**

<b>Estimated monthly expenses</b>	<b>in Swiss Francs (CHF)</b>	
	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>
<b>Study Material</b>	30,00	30,00
<b>fixed costs</b>		
Health/accident insurance for non-Europeans	50,00	100,00
Transport (travel pass, scooter, bike)	20,00	200,00
<b>Personal expenses</b>		
Clothes/shoes	70,00	100,00
Hairdresser/other care	40,00	60,00
Pocket money (mobile phone)	150,00	200,00
<b>Additional expenses</b>		
Medical expenses: medicines, dentists, doctors, opticians	50,00	50,00
<b>Accommodation</b>		
Rent, incl. electricity, compulsory TV-radio licence, third-party insurance	400,00	1 000,00
Meals	350,00	600,00
Cleaning costs	20,00	40,00
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 160.00</b>	<b>2 070.00</b>

More information on finances on <https://www.unine.ch/mobilite/en/incoming-students/finances/>

### **xiii. Visas**

Students who are from a third country (i.e non-EU or EFTA member) must apply for a visa to stay in Switzerland. **The nationality of the students is decisive and not the country of their home university.**

The visa application must be submitted to the Swiss representation **in the student's country of origin** at least three months before the planned arrival in Switzerland. Depending on the country of origin, a financial guarantee is sometimes required in the form of a financial affidavit.

#### **Which documents or information should be provided?**

- Certificate of enrolment as an exchange student from the University of Neuchâtel (before submitting an application for admission to Switzerland, the student must be in possession of a definitive admission certificate);
- Study plan, including duration;
- Curriculum vitae;
- Copies of diplomas, school certificates or other certificates obtained;
- A formal written commitment to leave Switzerland at the end of the period of residence;
- Proof of financial means:
  - bank statement showing that you have sufficient funds to cover the costs of your study stay in Switzerland, with a minimum deposit of CHF 1'600.- per month of stay in Switzerland, or
  - firm guarantee of a sufficient study or training grant with a copy of the documents relating to the grant [decision, amount, duration] for a minimum amount of CHF 1,600 per month.
- A copy of the student's passport;
- A letter of motivation stating precisely the reasons for choosing to follow a programme of study in Switzerland and stating for the future when the period of study ends.

*The documents provided must be translated into a Swiss national language and authenticated by the Swiss representation.*

Links: [https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/publiservice/weisungen-kreisschreiben/visa/liste1\\_staatsangehoerigkeit.html](https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/publiservice/weisungen-kreisschreiben/visa/liste1_staatsangehoerigkeit.html) and <https://www.eda.admin.ch/countries/usa/en/home/visa/entry-ch.html>

## **10. Insurance**

### **xiv. Health and accident insurance**

All students must be insured against sickness **and** accidents. The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) is usually sufficient for health. **Please check that you have the necessary accident coverage during your stay in Switzerland.**

Non-European students will need proof they have the necessary insurance coverage or will have to take out international insurance for students.

Link: <https://www.unine.ch/mobilite/en/incoming-students/insurances/>



**xv. Liability**

Liability insurance is not compulsory in Switzerland, but it is strongly recommended. In some situations, you may be required to show proof of liability insurance (e.g. for your accommodation). This insurance covers you against damage and injury caused to third parties.

**11. Social activities**

**xvi. Sports**

Approximately 100 courses in almost 60 different disciplines are offered each week. Neuchâtel's geographical location is perfect for a multitude of outdoor sports, including skiing, snowshoeing, golf, tennis, team sports and sailing, to name just a few. In addition to traditional sports, including personal fitness, the UniNE also offers disciplines such as aikido, capoeira and different types of dance activities. Most sports programmes are free, or provided at very competitive prices.

Link: <http://www10.unine.ch/sun/>

**xvii. Culture**

There are many associations offering cultural activities such as music, theatre and cinema on campus.

Link: <https://www.unine.ch/etudier/discover/activities>

## 12. Contact

### Study Exchange Office

Study Exchange Office

Avenue du 1er-Mars 26

CH-2000 Neuchâtel

T.+41 32 718 10 12

[bureau.mobilite@unine.ch](mailto:bureau.mobilite@unine.ch)

<https://www.unine.ch/mobilite/en/>

### Study advisors (information regarding courses and exams)

Faculty of Law

[conseil.droit@unine.ch](mailto:conseil.droit@unine.ch)

Faculty of Humanities

[conseil.lettres@unine.ch](mailto:conseil.lettres@unine.ch)

Faculty of Science

[conseil.sciences@unine.ch](mailto:conseil.sciences@unine.ch)

Faculty of Economics and Business

[etudes.seco@unine.ch](mailto:etudes.seco@unine.ch)

### Erasmus Student Network – Neuchâtel section

For any tips regarding the daily life in Neuchâtel, don't hesitate to contact the students of ESN

Email: [president@neuchatel.esn.ch](mailto:president@neuchatel.esn.ch)

Website : <https://neuchatel.esn.ch/>

**We look forward to welcoming you to the University of Neuchâtel**



