

Welcome to HE-Arc

Welcome Guide for Incoming Exchange Students

JULY 2026 - MOBILITY OFFICE



Four times faster learning

Dear incoming students,

The Mobility Team warmly welcomes you and thanks you for choosing HE-Arc for this unique experience.

An Erasmus+ study shows that young people who choose to study abroad — by stepping out of their comfort zone — develop valuable skills: better problem-solving abilities, greater adaptability and learning speed four times higher.

Congratulations! You made the right choice. Your decision shows your open-mindedness, curiosity and determination to enrich your academic and personal path.

To support you, we are pleased to share this welcome brochure, which includes all the information needed to prepare for and enjoy your stay in Switzerland under the best possible conditions.

You will find answers to most of your questions, and we encourage you to contact the Mobility Office and the departmental mobility coordinators for any further inquiries.

We hope that your experience at HE-Arc will be both unforgettable and enriching, academically, culturally and personally.

Welcome to HE-Arc and enjoy the adventure!
HE-Arc Mobility Team.

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Before arriving in Switzerland



Visa

Depending on your country of origin, you may need to **apply for a visa** at the Swiss embassy. Processing can take 3 to 4 months, so your application should be submitted well in advance.

UE / AELE No visa required for your stay

Non-European countries Visa required

For your visa application, you need to prepare several documents :

- Visa application form
- Motivation letter
- CV
- Passport
- Confirmation of enrolment at the host institution
- Copies of diplomas
- Mandatory indication of your planned place of residence and full address

Additional documents may be required; please check directly with the Swiss embassy responsible for your country of origin. Please note the processing time!



Accommodation

Finding affordable accommodation for the start of the semester can take time; we recommend starting your search **as early as possible**.

Useful links

- [Campus Facchinetti](#)
- Student residences : [La Résidence Neuchâtel et Mail 57](#)
- [Résidences Alfen](#) (No Wi-Fi access)
- [Belle5 co-living](#)
- Short-term rental : [My Seyon](#) ou [Airbnb](#)
- Flatshares : [Colocations Neuchâtel](#) and [colloc.ch](#)
- Facebook groups : [ColocAppart](#) and [Neuchâtel louer-acheter](#)
- Classifieds : [Anibis](#) and [Flatfox](#)

Rules and guidelines

- Put your name on the mailbox to receive your mail (and your residence permit)
- Pay your rent directly to your landlord

Make sure to check the end date of your lease to notify your landlord of your departure within the required time limits.

Before arriving in Switzerland



IT Procedures

An email will be sent to your personal email address (provided in your application file) by your departmental mobility coordinator with all the information about your IT account. We strongly recommend that you follow the instructions in this document **before** your arrival to ensure immediate access to our IT resources. Once these procedures are completed, you will have access to the HE-Arc Wi-Fi network and Eduroam.

Useful links (intranet HE-Arc)

Log in with your school account:
first name, last name.

- [First steps with INIT Platform](#)
- [How to initialise my accounts](#)
- [What are the IT accounts](#)
- [Which login for which platform](#)

In case of difficulty, do not hesitate to [contact us](#).

Offline maps

To help you get around the city of Neuchâtel, we recommend downloading the [city map](#) on Google Maps to access it offline and check public transport routes. Here is a [procedure](#).

SIM and eSIM cards

You can get a SIM card from a provider in Switzerland or set up an eSIM before your arrival. An eSIM is a SIM card built into your phone that lets you switch providers without a physical card, simply via the Internet.

Main mobile operators in Switzerland

[Swisscom Shop](#)

Rue Saint-Honoré 5
2000 Neuchâtel

[Salt Store](#)

Rue du l'Hôpital 20
2000 Neuchâtel

[Sunrise Shop](#)

Grand-Rue 4
2000 Neuchâtel

Make sure that the notice period and the duration of your contract are suitable for the length of your stay.

Recommended eSIM Brand

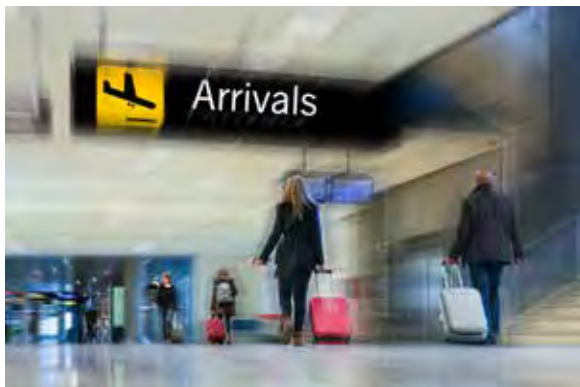
[Ubigi](#)

[Saily](#)

[GoMo](#) (Salt network)

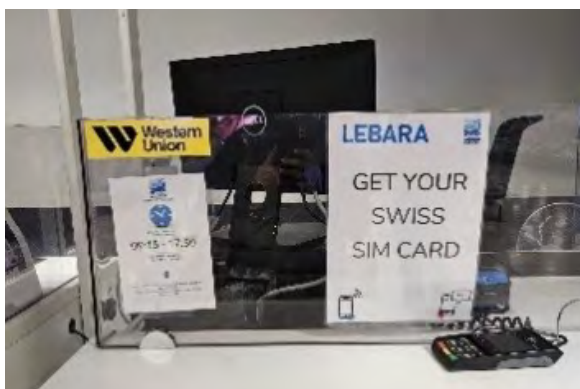
[TalkTalk](#) (Sunrise network)

Upon your arrival in Switzerland



At the airport

Upon your arrival at Geneva, Zurich or Basel airport, you can buy a SIM card. You will find dedicated counters for this purpose.



Example of a SIM card sales stand at Basel, Geneva and Zurich airports



Welcome week

Before classes begin, we are pleased to organize a welcome week. It starts on the Monday before the semester begins with a welcome morning at HE-Arc.

Social and cultural activities are organized throughout the week to help you discover the region. You will receive more information about the programme and registration a few weeks before the semester begins.

For some of you, sessions organized by your departments will also be planned during the week.

Your participation is mandatory.

In the evening, events will be organized by [ESN](#), they will be a great opportunity to meet other exchange students in Neuchâtel.



Upon your arrival in Switzerland



Residents' Registration Office

You must report within 14 days to the Residents' Registration Office of your municipality of residence.

Neuchâtel

Rue de l'Hôtel-de-Ville 1, 2000 Neuchâtel

You will need to provide the following documents :

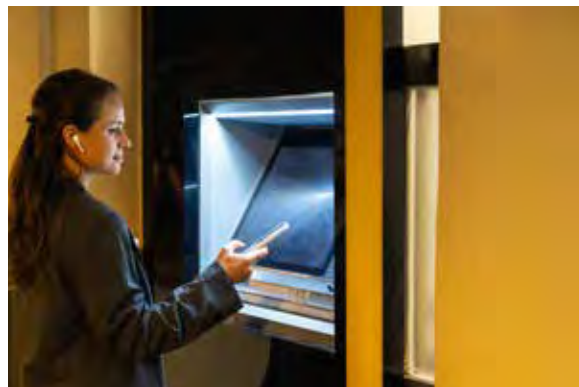
- Passport or ID card
- Certificate from HE-Arc
- Up-to-date civil status document (birth, marriage or divorce certificate, or family record book)
- Proof of financial means (from CHF 10'000.-)
For third-country nationals, please contact your HE-Arc departmental mobility coordinators, as specific formalities apply.
- Rental agreement for the accommodation
- Neuchâtel : [form](#)
- Other cantons: contact your local municipality.

Please note: you must report within 14 days to the Residents' Registration Office of your municipality of residence.

You will need to pay at the counter (by card or in cash) to obtain your certificate. Your residence permit, together with the invoice, will then be sent to you by mail.

Please allow approximately CHF 100.- to pay for these two documents.

Some municipalities offer discounts on public transport passes. Feel free to ask about this when you register with the Residents' Registration Office.



Bank / Post account

HE-Arc recommends opening a bank or postal account so your grant can be paid without any fees.

UBS Bank

Place Pury
2000 Neuchâtel
+41 32 722 41 11

PostFinance

Place Numa-Droz 2
2000 Neuchâtel
+41 848 888 710

Raiffeisen Bank

Rue St-Honoré 1
2000 Neuchâtel
+41 32 836 41 00

Neuchâtel Cantonal Bank

Place Pury 4
2000 Neuchâtel
+41 32 723 61 11

Jura Cantonal Bank

Place de la Poste 4
2800 Delémont 1
+41 32 465 13 01

Bern Cantonal Bank

Place du Marché 5
2610 St-Imier
+41 32 942 34 23

You can book appointments directly on banks' websites.

If you have a neobank account (e.g. Revolut), your grant can be paid into it.

In general, opening a bank account in Switzerland is free of charge. Feel free to check with the banks.

Please also check bank transaction fees related to the payment of your grant.

Upon your arrival in Switzerland



Public transports

Neuchâtel and Bern (St-Imier)

The canton of Neuchâtel and some parts of the Bernese Jura are served by the public transport company [TransN](#)

It offers an [abonnement Onde verte](#) for people under 25.

This pass also gives you access to the St. Imier region.

Onde Verte fares by number of zones :

Number of zones	Monthly price
1-2	57.-
3	83.-
4	107.-
5 et +	129.-

The pass is valid on buses, trams and trains within the selected zones.

Jura

In the canton of Jura, public transport is operated by [MOBIJU](#). It offers a pass for people under 25 called [Vagabon](#).

Vagabon fares by number of zones :

Number of zones	Monthly price
1	55.-
2	59.-
3	84.-
4	111.-
5 et +	136.-

The pass is valid on buses, trams and trains within the selected zones.

Discounts may be available; please check with the Residents' Registration Office of your municipality.

Switzerland

The national railway company is CFF. [Its website](#) and the [Preview CFF app](#) provide information on public transport schedules (buses, trains and trams) and allow you to buy tickets directly online. You can also purchase [discounted tickets](#) at reduced prices.

Throughout the year, CFF offers attractive temporary deals. You can view them on the [CFF homepage](#).

During your stay in Switzerland



Insurance

Health insurance in Switzerland

Health insurance (LAMAL) is mandatory in Switzerland.

European nationals are exempt, under the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons (EU and EFTA countries), from joining LAMAL in Switzerland upon presentation of their European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or an E-111 certificate, provided their coverage is equivalent to that required under Swiss law.

To be exempt from Swiss health insurance, **YOU** must contact the Cantonal Health Insurance Office and send your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or E-111 certificate, along with your school certificate.

Students from outside the EU and EFTA will be enrolled in a health insurance plan by the Mobility Office. This type of contract will exempt them from the obligation to join LAMAL.

[NEUCHÂTEL](#)

[BERNE](#)

[JURA](#)

Private liability insurance

Private liability insurance in Switzerland covers any damage you may unintentionally cause, either to others or to their property, whether individuals or organizations.

It is required for renting student accommodation. You must be covered for the duration of your stay in Switzerland. If your insurance does not cover your accommodation in Switzerland, the Mobility Office will support you with this process (approx. CHF 70.- per year).

If you are a tenant at Alfen, you are covered by a collective liability insurance, with a deductible of CHF 200.-. This insurance does not cover damage caused to third parties; you are therefore required to take out private liability insurance in addition.

Accident insurance

In Switzerland, taking out accident insurance is a voluntary process for incoming students. **Please check your insurance contracts and coverage.**

Student employment

EU/EFTA students

Students who are nationals of the EU/EFTA may undertake a secondary activity alongside their studies for up to 15 hours per week.

Etudiant·e·s UE/AELE

Non-European students are only authorized to undertake a paid secondary activity 6 months after the start of their studies.



During your stay in Switzerland



Erasmus Student Network

The [ESN](#) Association aims to support and energise the student community at HE-Arc and the University of Neuchâtel. Throughout the academic year, it organizes various events and excursions to help students discover Switzerland and meet other students.

ESN offers a card for exchange students. This card gives you access to discounts on their activities, in certain shops in Neuchâtel and with several Swiss and international partners.

You can purchase it from the ESN association for CHF 15.-. HE Arc refund this card for its exchange students. Please contact the [Mobility Office](#) for more information.

UniNE university sports

[SUN](#) offers a wide range of sports and physical activities. 110 classes and over 50 different disciplines are offered each week.

Most of UniNE's student sports programme is free.

Students from HE-Arc who wish to take part in university sports must purchase a SUN card from the sports office.

Shops opening hours

Monday to Friday	8 am - 7 pm
Thursday	8 am - 8 pm
Saturday	8 am - 6 pm

Some shops are open on Sundays, including those around Neuchâtel train station and petrol stations.

Free Wi-Fi spots

The canton of Neuchâtel provides free and secure spots Wi-Fi hotspots [free and secure spots Wi-Fi hotspots](#) in various locations, including the cities of Neuchâtel and La Chaux-de-Fonds, as well as cultural venues and public spaces.

Registration for this Wi-Fi network requires you to be able to receive SMS messages in Switzerland. Please keep this in mind if you register using a foreign phone number.



During your stay in Switzerland



Medical consultation

Neuchâtel Hospital Network - RHNe

[Book an appointment](#)

Pourtalès Hospital

Maladière 45
2000 Neuchâtel
+41 32 713 30 00

Cadolles Medical Center

Rue du Plan 28
2000 Neuchâtel
+41 31 723 81 81

La Chaux-de-Fonds Hospital

Rue du Chasseral 20
2303 La Chaux-de-Fonds
+41 32 967 21 11

Le Locle Hospital

Rue Bellevue 42
2400 Le Locle
+41 32 933 61 11
+41 32 942 24 22

[The Dispensaire Des Rues](#) in Neuchâtel offers free consultations with qualified nurses. **Opening hours are limited.**

Jura hospital

Delémont Hospital

Faubourg des Capucins 30
2800 Delémont
+41 32 421 21 21

Porrentruy Hospital

Chemin de l'Hôpital 9
2900 Porrentruy
+41 32 465 65 65

Canton Bern Hospital

St-Imier - Les Fontenayes hospital

Rue des Fontenayes 17
2610 Saint-Imier
+41 32 942 24 22

Biel Hospital Center

Chante-Merle 84
2510 Bienne
+41 32 324 24 24

Consultations and medical expenses are the responsibility of the student until the costs reach the deductible of their health insurance (LAMAL).

In case of emergency or health concerns, the Mobility Team must be informed and can support you. Please call us !

During your stay in Switzerland



On-call services night, sunday and bank holidays

Neuchâtel

Train station pharmacie

Open every day until 8:30 pm

On-call service

Doctor, dentist, pharmacist

0848 134 134

Directs you to the right contact

Jura

Emergency numbers

Bern (Saint-Imier)

In Saint-Imier, several contacts are available if you need medical services.

Students insured with Swisscare have 3 online medical appointments included, along with assistance.



Support

If you encounter any issues or have questions during your stay, the Mobility Office is available and there to support you.

- Talk about it!
- Solutions and advices
- Guide you to the right person

Administrative questions : Mobility Office.

Academic questions: your faculty mobility coordinator.

If needed, students can access support spaces for discussion and guidance, as well as advice from designated contact persons.

All the information is available on [this page](#).

Emergency numbers

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 144 | Ambulance, first aid, life emergencies |
| 117 | Police |
| 118 | Firefighters |
| 145 | Poisoning
(Medicines, toxic substances, etc.)
Emergency call |

During your stay in Switzerland



Sustainability

HE-Arc is committed to the climate transition and environmental protection, you can contribute :

Waste sorting

Switzerland has one of the highest recycling rates in Europe. This is largely due to the taxation of garbage bags and a highly developed sorting system. Separate containers are available for glass, paper, cardboard, PET, aluminum and organic waste. On [MEMODéchets](#), you can find all the necessary information for each municipality in French-speaking Switzerland. Alternatively, please contact your local municipality.

HE-Arc campuses also implement waste sorting; please pay attention to the systems provided.

Digital responsibility

HE-Arc is actively committed to digital responsibility and provides students and staff with a [guide to best digital practices](#). This document offers practical recommendations to adopt more sustainable habits, optimize the use of digital tools, and promote a more environmentally friendly digital culture.

Find all the latest sustainability news at HE-Arc here : <https://www.he-arc.ch/he-arc/durabilite/>



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