

Welcome!

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Master in Innovation, Human Development & Sustainability Pre-arrival guide

Geneva, June 2021



UNIVERSITÉ
DE GENÈVE

GENEVA SCHOOL OF
SOCIAL SCIENCES



GENEVA
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INITIATIVE



清華大學

Tsinghua University

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Introduction

University of Geneva (UNIGE) has been partnering with Tsinghua University (THU) - China's top university - on a highly interdisciplinary Master program on the UN SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals), since September 2017. This program is part of a broader collaboration on the SDGs, including summer schools, executive training and an exchange program, called the Geneva Tsinghua Initiative.

Compared to other Master programs dealing with the SDGs, this one will focus on defining and developing concrete institutional solutions for 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 Inter-Governmental Organizations (IGOs) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Geneva.

A special focus of this Master is an intercultural 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 the world's largest economy is tackling major sustainable development issues.

The GTI SDG Dual Degree Master Program (dual track) can be started either at University of Geneva or Tsinghua University, depending on where the student registers first. Students following the dual track will obtain two degrees at the end of their studies. At University of Geneva, the dual track is hosted by the **Geneva School of Social Sciences (G3S)** and is called **Master in Innovation, human development and sustainability (MIHDS)**. At Tsinghua University, it is organised by the **School of Public Policy and Management (SPPM)** and is called **Master of Public Policy for Sustainable Development Goals (MPP-SDG)**. The University of Geneva delivers a Master of Science (M.Sc.) while Tsinghua University provides a Master of Public Administration (MPA).

Students following the SDG Single Degree Master Program (single track) spend a semester at a partner university. The list of partners will be provided at the beginning of the academic year. The exchange semester can take place in China (Tsinghua University in Beijing or Shenzhen), but also Africa, Latin America and Europe. All partner universities are well-known for the quality of their master program in sustainability. A limited number of seats is available at each partner university. Students will have to apply during the first semester, following a procedure that will be communicated in due time.

More information :

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

Arriving in Geneva

Useful tip: if arriving by plane, you can pick up a **free ticket** for public transportation from the machine in the baggage collection area at the arrival level. This ticket, offered by Geneva Airport, allows you to use any form of public transportation in Geneva for a period of 80 minutes.

Geneva Public Transportation (TPG) website: www.tpg.ch

Visa

Depending on your nationality, you may need a visa to enter Switzerland to study in Geneva. It is said that it can take up to three months to obtain a visa, but students' applications are usually processed with priority and if the application documents you submit are complete, the process should take around one month time.

1. Consult the [website of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs](#) to enquire as to whether you need a visa or not. 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. Upon arrival, you have 14 days to apply for your Student permit at the Cantonal Office for Population and Migration (OCPM), at a cost of about CHF 250. The procedure is different if you are an EU/EFTA citizen or not, please find more info here:

<https://www.ge.ch/demander-permis-sejour-etudiant>

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

IMPORTANT: Non EU/EFTA (extra-European) students are not allowed to work during the first 6 months, so make sure you have enough financial resources to cover that period.

Health and accident insurance

Medical and pharmaceutical costs are high in Switzerland, and health insurance is **compulsory**. You must purchase medical and accident insurance upon your arrival.

1. As an international student, you are eligible for reduced-price health insurance starting from CHF 64 per month. 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. E.g. the option costing CHF 64 per month includes a deductible of CHF 1500. 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/>

You are free to choose any other health and accident insurance provider.

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.

Accommodation

It can be very difficult to find reasonably-priced accommodation in Geneva, so make sure you start your inquiries as early as possible. You can apply for UNIGE-managed accommodation as soon as your registration is being processed. See below a list of the main sources of student housing. You should also use social media and any contacts you may have in Geneva. Some current UNIGE MIHDS students who will spend next year or semester abroad may be able to swap their accommodation with you. You can contact them via the WeChat group.

If you are looking for an accommodation close to 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

Create an account and follow the instructions on the **Accommodation Registration Portal** of the University of Geneva: <https://www.logetud.ch>

Check other accommodation opportunities offered by UNIGE Accommodation Office: <https://www.unige.ch/batiment/service-batiments/logements/en/>

To find other student residences in Geneva, visit (in French only): <https://www.aglae.ch>

La Ciguë is a student housing co-op at very low rent : <https://cigue.ch/the-cigue-presented/>

Budget

Plan your budget carefully to ensure you have sufficient financial resources for your stay.

Items	Amount / month
Study costs	CHF 100
Health and Accident Insurance	Free with European Health Insurance Card Starting from CHF 64.- without European Health Insurance Card
RC Liability Insurance	CHF 80 per year
Transportation	CHF 45/CHF 75 (over 25 years old)
Rent	CHF 700.- (average)
Electricity / telephone	CHF 130.-
Food	CHF 600.-
Clothes/cultural activities/leisure	CHF 250.-
TOTAL	Approx. CHF 2000.-

Life in Geneva

Transportation

Geneva has a very good public transportation system that will quickly and conveniently get you to any corner of the city. The Geneva Public Transport network is named UNIRESO. It is an interconnected system of trams and buses (TPG), boats (SMGN) and trains (CFF) that covers the city of Geneva, the Canton of Geneva, and parts of neighbouring 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)

Unireso Pass:

For long stays, it is worth purchasing a 1-year zone 10 TPG/Unireso passcard (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 in the northern entrance, upper part of the station), or online. You will need to provide Your ID, and Geneva address where you are living in Geneva.

Single transportation tickets:

The single UNIRESO ticket is valid for buses, trams, lake boats and local trains (including Cornavin Airport train) within a given Unireso zone. The most common ticket is valid for 60 minutes and is transferable (CHF 3). There are also short ride 3-stops tickets (CHF 2). Tickets must be bought at the ticket machines (cash, credit cards and phone app payment, euros and CHF accepted) located at every stop and inside some buses going outside of the city.

Even more conveniently, simply buy your ticket via SMS: send an SMS from your Swiss SIM with text "tpg1" to 788 to obtain a 1-hour, transferable ticket (CHF 3), **before boarding** the vehicle. For other codes: <https://www.unireso.com/sms/>

Maps and Schedules:

Can be found on TPG website (<https://www.tpg.ch/fr>) 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

You can easily find second-hand bikes at affordable prices. Sales are regularly organised by [Pro Velo Genève](#), including a sale at the start of each semester on University grounds. [La Bicyclette Bleue](#) rents bikes from 3 to 12 months at very cheap rates (starting at CHF 50 for 3 months.)

Short term bike rentals: [Genève Roule](#) rents bikes for minimum one day, and also offers a shared bike program via the app [Donkey Republic](#) (first hour free).

Wearing a helmet is not compulsory in Geneva, but the biking infrastructure is not complete all over the city and we therefore strongly recommend you wear one.

Travelling in Switzerland

The Swiss railway (SBB CFF FFS) is hands-down the best way to get around the country, it is usually punctual and efficient.

The SBB CFF FFS website (<https://www.sbb.ch/en/home.html>) offers comprehensive information in English about traveling with train in Switzerland. You can buy tickets online or at any train station, with multi-lingual interfaces. You can also buy tickets with the SBB mobile app.

Trains can be very pricey in Switzerland. To overcome this, visit www.swisstravelsystem.com for the most comprehensive information on money-saving travel passes. Some of the most popular choices are:

- 1) 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.
- 2) Swiss Flexi Pass, which entitles you to unlimited travel throughout rail, bus and boat Swiss Travel System network during 3, 4, 5 or 6 days of your choice within 1 month. etc.
- 3) Saver Day Pass. Travel throughout Switzerland for a day on all routes in the GA area for reduced costs. Whether on SBB trains or trains of other rail companies, on boats, buses, trams or postbuses – the Saver Day Pass allows you to travel in many different ways. These passes have many advantages for foreigners.
- 4) 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>

Scenic Routes

Visitors often find a scenic train ride as one of the most enjoyable experiences in Switzerland. Glacier Express is a 7,5 hours train ride from Zermatt to Davos / St Moritz via Andermatt (www.glacierexpress.ch). Golden Pass line extends from Lucerne to Montreux by lake Geneva via Interlaken (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. You can consult the route map on the Swiss Travel System web site for more detailed information.

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, also some tabac stores can advise you on options). If you plan to use mostly data, Lebara offers inexpensive plans from 14.90/month for 1GB of data. On www.yallo.ch, you can also obtain cheap sim cards – text to anywhere in Europe for 15 Cents, a call to any other phone for 22-25 Cents / minute in most countries.

Food

Canteens/Cafeterias

Almost all UNIGE buildings have canteens/cafeterias that serve hot meals or sandwiches at preferential prices for students (show your UNIGE card).

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 on the weighing machine.

We encourage students to bring your own shopping bags, and to use as little plastics as possible in the process of grocery shopping (for example, not using a plastic bag for fruits/vegetables but sticking the label directly on them). For plastic-free, fresh grocery shopping there are 28 local farmers' markets in Geneva: <https://www.genevemarches.ch/>. L'Union Maraichère in Carouge sells second category veggies for cheaper prices. So if you don't mind not having a perfectly regular tomato, you will love them. 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.), such as [Le Bocal Local](#), [Le Nid](#), [L'Arcade](#)...

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

Safety and Wellbeing

Medical Services

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

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 proscribed, especially sexual harassment. If you have any concern, or if you experience or witness unacceptable behavior, please contact your student representative or any member of the GTI team.

We are looking forward to meeting you in Geneva!