

**Welcome
guide
for
international
minds**

**University
of
Applied
Sciences
and
Arts
of
Southern
Switzerland**

SUPSI

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This guide has been created to welcome new arrivals from abroad. Its aim is not to address specific needs but to make our guests feel at home by offering advice, information, and tips from the moment they decide to move to Ticino.

Travel broadens the mind, and encountering different cultures and traditions provides fresh perspectives and helps us grow, enriching both the guest and the host.

It's no coincidence that in Italian, "ospite" means both host and guest. Welcome to SUPSI!

Team International Office
Team Gender and Diversity

SUPSI, University of experience



SUPSI, the University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland, is one of Swiss universities recognized by the Confederation. As a member of Swissuniversities, it offers over 30 bachelor's and master's degrees, emphasizing research, continuing education, and services. SUPSI focuses on applied research through projects funded by European and national agencies, contributing to regional development. The programs combine technical-scientific methods with practical approaches, allowing students to balance studies with professional commitments and preparing them for real-world challenges.

6'200

Undergraduate and Graduate
Studies students

53 mio

Million CHF
research budget

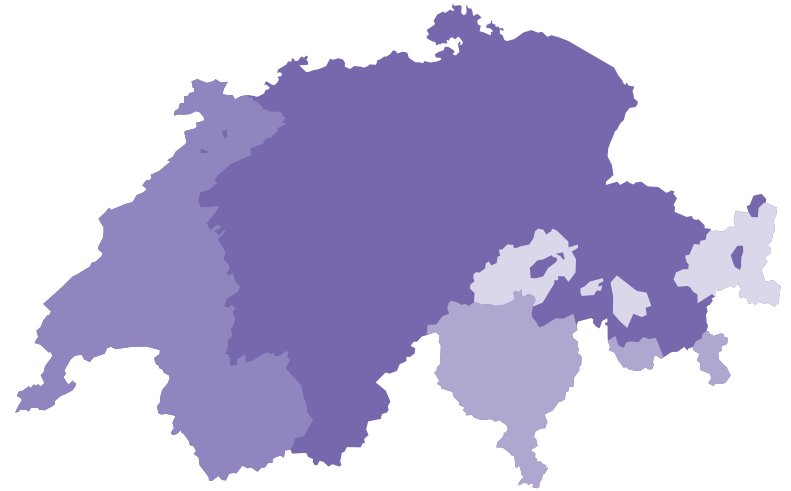
4'480

Participants in certificated
Continuing Education courses

1'273

Employees

About Switzerland



Berne

Capital city

1291

Official date of birth of the Old Swiss Confederation (Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden)

since 1848

Form of government:
Parliamentary federal state
since 1848, direct democracy

1st August

National day

26

Cantons

Aletsch

Largest glacier
117 km² / 24 km long

4'634 m

Highest mountain
Dufourspitze

582 km²

Largest lake
Geneva

1'484

Numbers
of lakes

1'881 km

Borders

41'285 Km²

Area

UTC+1

Time zone CET

4

Languages

■ 64% German,
■ 20% French,
■ % Italian,
■ 0,5% Romansh
and 9,5% Other)

9 mio

Permanent resident
population

+41 ...

International direct
dialling code

Ticino Living Essentials

Ticino, a Swiss canton south of the Alps with a rich cultural and historical heritage, has a strong Mediterranean influence. Shaped like an upside-down triangle, it borders Italy, sharing both the Italian language and part of its history. Ticino's four regions are Bellinzona and Northern Ticino, Lake Maggiore and Valleys, Lake Lugano, and Mendrisiotto.

Accommodation

The monthly rent for a shared single room or studio apartment ranges from CHF 450.– to 1200.–

For an apartment of approximately 50 square meters, the rent is also around CHF 1200.–

Be sure to check if this amount includes additional costs such as heating, hot water, electricity, and the TV license fee.

Food

It's recommended to budget around CHF 450.– per month for food. However, this amount may vary based on your personal tastes and lifestyle. Additionally, some campuses have partnerships with local pizzerias and cafes that offer discounts.

Moving by public transports

An Arcobaleno travel pass allows you to move around Ticino freely, using a range of different modes of public transport, such as trains, city buses, regional buses, boats (consult the conditions specified by the navigation companies). A monthly expenditure of about CHF 100-200 is recommended. Young people under the age of 20 and students under the age of 27 will be eligible for a 50% subsidy.

► www.arcobaleno.ch/en/home

Moving by bicycle

PubliBike is a bicycle hire service operating in some towns in Canton Ticino. Bicycles are available at automatic docking stations, in operation 24 hours a day.

► www.publibike.ch/en/home

Moving by car

In Switzerland you must be 18 years old before you are legally permitted to drive a car. This is also the minimum age for obtaining a driving licence. Before the end of their first year of residence in Switzerland, car drivers from abroad must replace their original driving licence with a Swiss driving licence.

Moving by plane

The nearby Milano-Malpensa airport is about 80km away from Lugano and reachable either by train or bus. Milano-Linate and Bergamo airports are also reasonably close.

Shops

Shops are typically open Monday to Friday, 9:00 to 19:00 and until 21:00 on Thursdays. On Saturdays, they usually close by 18:00. Most shops are closed on Sundays. Large stores, local shops, and petrol stations with special licenses may stay open later, including on Sundays and holidays.

Post

Post Offices offer various services, including mailing letters and parcels, selling stamps, and providing payment and financial services. The cost for sending items depends on their size, weight, and the delivery speed selected.

► www.post.ch

Banks

Banks are usually open Monday to Friday, 9.00 to 16.30/17.00, except for holiday periods.

Pharmacies

Pharmacies operate with the same opening/closing hours as all other commercial enterprises. At weekends and holidays, and in the evenings, service is guaranteed by an on-duty rota system.

► www.ofct.ch

Discover Ticino

With lakes, rivers, ski slopes, and 4'000 km of trails, ample sports options are available, supported by local organizations. The Student Life Service, in collaboration with SUPSI's student and alumni association, offers regular and seasonal activities at subsidized rates, enhancing academic life with social and cultural opportunities and promoting lifelong sports participation.

Fun fact:

Ice hockey is especially popular in Ticino, as it is throughout Switzerland. The two local clubs, HC Lugano and HC Ambri-Piotta, face off in exciting local derbies and compete against other Swiss teams in regular matches from September to April.

Events

Here is a brief list of key events and activities throughout the year, including both new and traditional ones, to ensure you don't miss out. > www.ticino.ch/en/explore/events/all-events.html

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| February | – Carnival, all over Ticino |
| May | – Wine cellars open to the public |
| June / July | – Music and city festivals, all over Ticino |
| August | – Locarno Film Festival |
| September / October | – Grape Festival and Autumn Festival all over Ticino |
| December | – Christmas Markets, all over Ticino |

Museums, arts and architecture

The area between Chiasso and Airolo boasts around 70 museums and galleries, showcasing over 1'500 years of art. Ticino's history, architecture, and art blend with its natural beauty, featuring monuments, contemporary buildings, and charming country churches. Notably, the Castles of Bellinzona and Monte San Giorgio are UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Consult the various city and regional tourist office websites:

Swiss National Tourist Office ► www.myswitzerland.com

Ticino Tourism ► www.ticino.ch

City of Lugano ► www.lugano.ch

Lugano Region ► www.luganoregion.com

City of Locarno ► www.locarno.ch

Ascona Locarno Tourist Office ► www.ascona-locarno.com

City of Bellinzona ► www.bellinzona.ch

Bellinzone e Alto Ticino Turismo ► www.bellinzoneaturismo.ch

Tourist Office of Mendrisiotto
and Basso Ceresio ► www.mendrisiotourism.ch

Tip:
All museums in
Lugano are free of
charge on the first
Sunday of every
month.

Cuisine

Ticino cuisine, closely related to Lombardy's, blends traditional recipes with fresh, local ingredients. It features simple, flavorful dishes like minestrone, pumpkin soup, risotto, roast meats, polenta, and local fish. Popular desserts include tortelli (sweet fritters), bread cake, and amaretti (almond biscuits). Beverages include lemonade, a range of wines, and local liquors like grappa and ratafià (walnut-based).

Fun fact:

"i Grotti", quintessentially Ticino structures, are restaurants, usually located in shady, out-of-the-way areas. They were our grandparents' "refrigerators", now transformed into restaurants. They are synonymous with home cooking, and provide simple, local dishes like those mentioned above. Wine is usually served in a traditional ceramic jug or cup.

Bureaucratic matters

For more detailed information on visas we recommend to contact the Swiss Embassy in your home country or visit the Federal Migration Office's website.

► www.sem.admin.ch

For more detailed information on permits we recommend to consult the Ticino Migration Office's website.

► www4.ti.ch/di/spop/stranieri

Passports, visas and permits

Foreigners need a valid travel document to enter Switzerland and may require a visa, especially non-EU/EFTA nationals. For stays over 90 days or gainful employment, a permit is needed. Permits include short-term, temporary, and long-term options.

Residents control office

Foreigners and staff must register at the Municipal Resident Control Office.

Staff and students living in Italy with an EU passport or valid Italian residence permit who return home daily do not need a Swiss permit. A study permit does not allow gainful employment. However, students at Swiss universities may be permitted to work if the academic institution certifies that it does not interfere with their studies or extend their study period, and if it complies with federal and cantonal regulations. The SUPSI International Office, provides students from non-EU/EFTA countries with support and assistance in the application procedure for a residence permit for study purposes, in line with federal immigration provisions.

Family reunification

Foreigners residing in Switzerland may apply for family reunification for their spouse, and for unmarried children aged under 18, provided specific conditions are met (e.g.: availability of suitable housing, sufficient income, etc.).

Health and Accident Insurance

Everyone in Switzerland must get health insurance within three months. EU staff and families should arrange insurance in their employer's country. EU staff and students can request an exemption from Swiss insurance; otherwise, they'll be enrolled in the Swiss system. Non-EU/EFTA students without equivalent home insurance can get student-priced coverage through SUPSI.

Private Liability Insurance (RC)

Private liability insurance is optional but highly recommended. It covers damages caused to third parties and related compensation (e.g., while engaging in sports, as a pet owner, or as a tenant).

Social Security

Swiss social security aims to provide a decent standard of living through redistribution to reduce financial inequalities. It operates on a three-pillar system:

1. **Compulsory State Insurance (First Pillar):** Includes AVS (old age and survivors' insurance), AD (unemployment insurance), IPG (compensation for loss of earnings due to military/civil service or maternity), and AI (invalidity insurance).
2. **Compulsory Professional Insurance (Second Pillar):** Includes LPP (pension contributions) and LAINF (accident insurance), applicable only to those employed in Switzerland. SUPSI staff have insurance for earnings loss due to illness or accidents. For details, consult the SUPSI Personnel Regulations online at SUPSI Documenti Ufficiali.
3. **Optional Private Insurance (Third Pillar):** Provides additional savings for old age to help maintain a decent standard of living.

Tax system

SUPSI staff from abroad not domiciled in Switzerland must pay withholding tax, deducted from their salary. Students from countries with a Swiss tax treaty and residing in Switzerland solely for study are exempt from Swiss taxes, even if they earn income from their home country. For other cases, consult your local tax office.

► www4.ti.ch/dfc/dc/chi-siamo/uct

Family allowance

Those with children aged between 0 and 16 (from birth until the month in which the child turns 16) are entitled to apply for basic family allowance, which amounts to CHF 200.- per month irrespective of the employment percentage (if you are not already entitled to the education allowance, respectively up to the age of 20 if your child has a full or partial earning).

Those with children aged between 15 (or starting from post-compulsory education) and the age at which studies are completed, up to a maximum of 25, are entitled to receive an education allowance, which amounts to CHF 250.- per month irrespective of the employment percentage.

The family allowance is transferred directly by the employer, subject to cantonal authorisation. Family allowance application forms can be downloaded from:

► <https://www4.ti.ch/dss/ias/prestazioni-e-contributi/scheda/p/s/dettaglio/assegni-familiari/assegni-per-figli-e-di-formazione>
For other allowances for families, please see the link:

► www4.ti.ch/dss/ias/persona

The Gender and Diversity Service is available for advice on other possibilities of support that promote the reconciliation of work and family study. You can contact the Service at diversity@supsi.ch

Additional insights

Education System in Ticino

Ticino's education system includes compulsory schooling (nursery, elementary, and middle school), followed by upper-secondary or vocational schools. Students can then pursue higher education at universities, Federal Polytechnics, Universities of Applied Sciences, or SUPSI. Specialized support is available for students with learning disabilities.

► www.ti.ch/scuole

Extracurricular services

Extracurricular services (after school and social activities, transport, etc.) are organised by each school in accordance with its specific needs and requirements. In order to obtain further details about the services offered, it is therefore necessary to ask each school, consult the website of the town in which you reside, or the Infosocialità website page.

► www.ti.ch/infofamiglie

Your SUPSI services

International Office

The International Office is responsible for managing and overseeing all matters related to internationalization, with a particular focus on mobility programs such as the Swiss European Mobility Program (SEMP). The service is primarily dedicated to supporting students, academic staff, and employees and providing advice, welcoming, and organizing incoming mobility at SUPSI.

► www.supsi.ch/international

The Service is also available to SUPSI students and staff for advice and accompaniment on gender and diversity issues such as: work-study-life balance, mobbing, discrimination, sexual and non-sexual harassment, disability, cultural differences, LGBTQIA+, etc. The Service is also available to assist anyone wishing to explore these issues further (e.g. Bachelor and Master theses).

► www.supsi.ch/en/equal-opportunities

Gender and Diversity

The Gender and Diversity Service operates with a view to valuing diversity, helping to eradicate stereotypes linked to differences in gender, generation, culture and ability, and to guarantee equal opportunities at SUPSI. Activities concern the work-study-life balance, projects for a more equal presence of men and women in the various degree courses and hierarchical positions at SUPSI, the promotion of inclusive teaching and research projects for people with special educational needs as well as sensitive to gender differences.

SUPSIInido

The Early childhood service coordinates the SUPSI nursery centres (SUPSIInido Manno, USI SUPSIInido Viganello and SUPSIInido Locarno). These are designed for children aged 4 months to 3-4 years.

► www.supsi.ch/en/day-nursery

Student Advisory

The Student Advisory Service assists students in choosing university studies and supports graduates' careers through individual consultations. It also promotes services like scholarships, tutoring, career guidance testing and workshops on career planning.

► www.supsi.ch/en/university-life

Student Services

Once enrolled as student, you can consult all the services you will be able to access in a unique digital space: the SUPSI Student Portal. In this platform you will find information about your grades, the upcoming events and activities, a list of all the conventions you can benefit from and a lot more!

Human Resources

Human Resources manages SUPSI staff and, along with HR referents in each Department, supports employees throughout their time at SUPSI, serving as a key point for implementing personnel policies.

► risorseumane@supsi.ch

Area of foreign languages

The Area of foreign languages is responsible for organising and teaching the English and German language modules for SUPSI students. It is also responsible for the organisation and certification of language levels. In addition, it manages intensive courses in English, German and Italian for SUPSI students and it contributes to the development of the linguistic, communicative and intercultural skills of SUPSI staff.

► www.supsi.ch/en/list

Research and innovation

The Research Support provides researchers in SUPSI with a wide range of services: Advice during the grant proposal process and general information related to funding for research and innovation projects. Personal support for researchers on all aspects of national, international and European sources of research.

► www.supsi.ch/en/research-innovation-overview

Counselling helpdesk and psychological help

SUPSI provides students, employees and collaborators with a psychological help desk to which they can turn in the event of personal, interpersonal, affective and relational difficulties related to university and/or professional life.

► www.supsi.ch/en/counselling-helpdesk-and-psychological-help

Sport and Wellbeing

The Sport and Wellbeing Service aims to raise awareness of the importance of sports and encourage participation. It also promotes inter-university events and collaborates on health-promotion activities.

► www.supsi.ch/en/sports-activities
► www.supsi.ch/en/extracurricular-courses

Continuing Education

SUPSI provides flexible lifelong learning opportunities designed to enhance both professional and personal development. With a diverse range of programs, including Advanced Studies, Short-Term Continuing Education, and Customized In-Company Training, SUPSI's continuing education is tailored to meet the unique needs and goals of individuals and organizations. This ensures continuous growth and success in an ever-evolving world.

► www.supsi.ch/en/continuing-education-overview

MySUPSIcard

The badge allows you to benefit from discounts, special rates and services offered by SUPSI, all over Southern Switzerland. The card comes in three versions: staff, alumni and students, so it also functions as a personal university identity document.

Information on the various benefits can be found on the student portal and on the employee portal.

Balancing family and study/work commitments at SUPSI

SUPSI conducts a range of activities and initiatives to help staff and students balance their family and study/work responsibilities. There are a number of organisational solutions for those who need to offset their study obligations with other commitments, such as family, professional, military, or with sporting or artistic activities, allowing the duration of studies to be extended.

In order to ensure equity of access to studies, SUPSI, for some degree courses, offers the Part-time study modality that allows students to undertake or continue an education by facilitating the reconciliation of study with other personal or professional commitments. In general, however, SUPSI is

sensitive to the requests of people with extra-curricular commitments, compatibly with the requirements of the individual study programmes.

The Gender and Diversity service provides staff and students with support in terms of these issues and provides useful information regarding current regulations and measures drawn up in order to promote family welfare.

The Gender and Diversity service conducts a range of extra-curricular activities organised for children aged between 4 and 14, also in collaboration with other initiatives available in the local area.

► <https://www.supsi.ch/en/equal-opportunities>

Check list departure

What to do before leaving Ticino/Switzerland - A check list is definitely a good idea, to help you remember the important issues and prevent you from wasting too much time on bureaucratic matters. Here are some ideas:

- Permits and residence: depending on the type of permit, notify the appropriate offices your departure.
- Home, parking space, etc.: check the contractual terms.
- Insurance: review the terms and procedures to cancel health, accident, and public liability policies.
- Telephone, TV, and other services: Review cancellation procedures for each contract.
- End of working / study relationship with SUPSI: together with the appropriate offices, check all the aspects related to your work and/or study period with SUPSI.
- Pay all invoices before departure: if there are still invoices pending when you leave, it is advisable to provide a new address to which the pending payment demand can be sent.

Useful Numbers

144

Ambulance,
Accident and
Emergency

145

Urgent cases
of intoxication

143

Emotional
first aid

117

Police

1414

Rega: helicopter
rescue

163

Traffic
conditions

118

Firefighters

140

Emergency
Roadside
Assistance

091 800 18 28

Doctor on call

Hospitals

Ospedale Regionale
di Bellinzona e Valli
T +41 91 811 91 11

Ospedale Regionale
di Mendrisio
T +41 91 811 31 11

Ospedale Regionale
di Locarno
T +41 91 811 41 11

Ospedale Civico
Lugano
T +41 91 811 61 11

Ospedale Italiano Lugano
T +41 91 811 75 11

