Welcome Guide 2016/2017
# Table of contents

Welcome to the University ........................................................................................................................................... 3
General Information about Finland and Helsinki........................................................................................................ 4
University of Helsinki in a nutshell .............................................................................................................................. 7
Before Arrival and Settling In ...................................................................................................................................... 9
Enrolment and registration – at the university and with the authorities ................................................................. 11
Housing ........................................................................................................................................................................ 16
University Services and Facilities ............................................................................................................................ 20
System of Studies ........................................................................................................................................................ 25
Student Union and Student Card .............................................................................................................................. 14
Tuition fees, scholarships and grants .......................................................................................................................... 16
Welcome to the University of Helsinki

Dear International Student,

Welcome to the University of Helsinki!

We are pleased that you are planning to begin your studies at the University of Helsinki, which is the oldest and largest institution of academic education in Finland. The University of Helsinki consists of an international scientific community of 40,000 students and researchers. The University of Helsinki also typically ranks among the top 100 universities in the world. Through the power of science, the University has contributed to society, education and well-being since 1640.

We hope that you will find this Welcome Guide as a helpful tool for settling in and starting your studies at the University of Helsinki. The guidebook contains some practical information and some useful links that hopefully will help you get a smooth transition into the student life in Helsinki. Hopefully you will find answers to some of the many questions you might have in this guidebook.

We hope that you enjoy your time here at the University of Helsinki and good luck with your studies! We are looking forward to meeting you soon!

Best wishes,
The staff of the International Exchange Services
General information about Finland and Helsinki

Finland

Finland is a republic that became independent in 1917. The head of state is the president and the ultimate political power is vested in the 200-member unicameral parliament. The population of Finland today is about 5.5 million. The unit of currency is the euro (symbols: €, EUR), divided into 100 cents.

Most Finns live in urban areas. Helsinki (the capital city), Espoo and Vantaa form the Metropolitan Region, which is home to roughly a fifth of the country’s total population. Other major cities are Tampere, Turku, Lahti and Oulu.

Ethnically, Finland is still a very homogeneous country. The foreign community makes up about 3.8% of the population. The biggest groups of immigrants are from Estonia, Russia and Sweden. Among them are a considerable number of people of Finnish descent.

Finland is rightly known as a land of forests: they cover roughly three quarters of the country’s surface area of 338 000 sq. km. Other outstanding features of Finland’s scenery are its many lakes and islands. Lakes and other bodies of water cover 10 % of the territory. The principal archipelago lies off the southwest coast while the main lake district, centred on Lake Saimaa, is in the east. The semiautonomous province of the Åland Islands occupies a special position as it has been declared a demilitarised area under international law.

Geography and Climate

Finland is situated in northern Europe between the 60th and 70th parallels of latitude. A quarter of its total area lies north of the Arctic Circle. Finland’s neighbouring countries are Sweden to the west, Norway to the north, Russia to the east and Estonia to the south, across the Gulf of Finland.

Cold winters and warm summers mark the climate, but temperatures in winter are moderated by the influence of the Baltic Sea and west winds from the Atlantic warmed by the Gulf Stream. The average
Annual temperature in the capital, Helsinki, is 6.7° centigrade. The highest daytime temperature in southern Finland during the summer occasionally rises close to 30° centigrade. During the winter months, particularly in January and February, temperatures of -15° centigrade are quite common. In the far north, beyond the Arctic Circle, the sun does not set for 73 days, producing the white nights of summer. In the same region, during the dark winter period, the sun remains below the horizon for 51 days, creating the polar night known in Finnish as *kaamos*.

**Climate and survival tips for winter**

Do not take chances with the winter cold! Warm winter clothing should not be considered a luxury. Seek advice from those familiar with the climate. Look for comfort and simplicity in clothing. In order to withstand slush, snow, sleet and rain as well as the sand and salt used on icy sidewalks and roads, winter boots should be waterproof, warm, lightweight and stain repellent. Winter clothing essentials might include a down (or polyester) coat or parka, mittens or gloves, a wool hat or earmuffs and long underwear. Dressing in "layers" is advisable, since you will often move from well-heated buildings into the wet and cold and then back. In Finland all the houses have central heating and warm water is available around the clock.

**Language**

The Finnish language is a member of the Finno-Ugric linguistic family that includes, in one branch, Finnish, Estonian and a number of other Finnic tongues and, in the other, Hungarian, by far the biggest language of the Ugric group. The official languages of Finland are Finnish and Swedish, the latter now spoken as a mother tongue by 5.3% of the people. Another indigenous minority language is Sami, spoken by the Sami of Lapland. The official standing of Swedish has historical roots in the period when Finland was part of the Swedish realm, a status that began approximately at the beginning of the 13th century and lasted until 1809.

**Religion**

There has been complete freedom of religion in Finland since 1923. The Evangelical Lutheran Church is the country's biggest denomination. About 75% of the people are baptised as Lutherans while just
about 1% belong to the Finnish Orthodox Church. Both denominations are designated as state churches. Although Christianity probably reached Finland before the end of the first millennium, it was not until the 12th century that the Roman Catholic Church became established. This followed a missionary expedition to southwest Finland led by King Erik of Sweden with the English-born bishop Henry. The influence of the Orthodox faith spread into the country from the east.

University education in Finland

The foundations of the university system in Finland were laid in 1640, when the University of Helsinki was established. It was the only university in the country for almost three centuries. Today there are 14 universities in Finland; eleven of them are multi-faculty universities, two technical universities, one business school and one art academy. In addition to the universities, there is one military academy. Two of the universities operate entirely in Swedish. About 20 000 new university students start their studies each year. At present, most Finnish universities do not charge tuition fees, but students have to pay their housing and living expenses themselves. For Finnish citizens, these expenses are partially subsidised by the state. The state assists students with study grants, housing allowances and with guarantees on loans from private banks. The student unions charge small fees to cover their activities and to maintain student health care and other services.

City of Helsinki

Helsinki is the capital of Finland and its centre of administration, finance and culture. It has a population of about 612 664 and, together with its neighbouring municipalities, constitutes Finland's biggest economic and market region. All in all, the Helsinki region is home to 1.3 million inhabitants. It has a diverse economy and is one of the most service-intensive urban regions in Europe. Helsinki is a metropolis whose salient feature is the proximity of the sea and of unpolluted nature.

The cosmopolitan, multicultural Helsinki of today is an extremely popular tourist and congress city. It is also Finland's major centre for higher education. Many international comparisons have rated it one of the most attractive cities of the world in terms of quality of life and business.
University of Helsinki in a nutshell

The University of Helsinki (Helsingin yliopisto/Helsingfors universitet) is the oldest and largest university in Finland. It was founded in 1640 as the Academy of Turku, Turku being the former capital of Finland, which was then part of the Swedish realm. After Finland was annexed to the Russian Empire in 1809, the capital was moved to Helsinki. In 1827, the University was transferred to Helsinki, where it opened the following year under the name of the Imperial Alexander University, after the Russian Tsar Alexander the First. It was the only university in Finland until 1919.

By Scandinavian standards, the University of Helsinki is a large university, with about 43 500 members when students, teachers and other staff numbers are combined. Of the 35 200 students in the eleven faculties 64 % are women. The University of Helsinki is bilingual with instruction and services offered in both Finnish and Swedish: about 6.5% of the degree students are Swedish-speakers. In some fields of study, such as law, quotas are reserved for Swedish-speaking students in an effort to guarantee equal linguistic rights for all. The total enrolment of international students, including exchange students, is presently around 2 200 students per year.

The University of Helsinki is a combination of an older, more traditional educational institution and a modern, dynamic international university. Admission is difficult and the pace of studies is to certain extent up to the individual. One outstanding feature of studies at the University of Helsinki is the emphasis on the student’s own initiative and individual work.

Some of the instruction is still in the traditional lecture form, and the relationship between the student and instructor can remain quite official and hierarchical. However, many teachers and entire departments have moved towards more student-to-student and student-to-instructor discussion-orientated lessons and tutoring and most teachers welcome active student participation. Modern teaching technology has dramatically changed the style of teaching. Today, there are close to 20,000 computers connected to the University’s networks. Diverse on-line opportunities are an essential part of everyday studies of every student of the University of Helsinki.
Building and facilities

The University was moved to Helsinki a year after the Great Fire of Turku had destroyed most of the old Academy. New buildings for the University were erected in the centre of the new capital. The Main Building the Observatory were completed in 1832, while the University Library was completed in 1840.

Several other buildings were erected near the Main Building in the late 19th and early 20th century. These buildings are some of Helsinki's most beautiful sights. The Main Building's older half faces the famous Senate Square (Senaatintori), the site of many national ceremonies and celebrations. Until the 1950's, the entire university was located in the centre of Helsinki.

The campuses and faculties

Today, the University of Helsinki has four main campus areas: the City Centre, Meilahti, Kumpula and Viikki. The eleven faculties of the University of Helsinki are spread out and located at different campus areas.

In the City Centre Campus the faculties are: Faculty of Theology, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Social Sciences, and Faculty of Behavioural Sciences. The Faculty of Medicine is located in Meilahti and the Faculty of Science is located at the Kumpula Campus. In the Viikki Campus the faculties are: Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry, Faculty of Biological and Environmental Sciences, Faculty of Pharmacy and Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

The contact details for the Faculties can be found: [https://www.helsinki.fi/en/studying/contact-us/faculties](https://www.helsinki.fi/en/studying/contact-us/faculties)
Before Arrival and Orientation

Once you have been accepted to study at the University of Helsinki as a degree, exchange or visiting student, there are a few things you need to do before you arrive in Helsinki. On the New student’s website you can find the information about the steps you need to take as well as useful tips for when you are starting your travel to Helsinki.

Please familiarize yourself with the information available here: https://www.helsinki.fi/en/studying/new-students

Get your own checklist

Check out the Uni Arrival Advisor! The Advisor is an electronic service that will guide you through the steps you need to take on your path to the University of Helsinki. Through the service you will get a checklist that guides you through the process of arriving in Finland and settling in at the University and in Helsinki.

To get your checklist please use the Uni Arrival Advisor here: https://uniarrival.helsinki.fi/app/index.html#

Orientation and Welcome Fair

Your studies at the University of Helsinki begins with the Orientation Week. The week includes the Welcome Fair, your faculty’s own orientations meetings and tutoring. You need to take part in all three!

Orientation week is organized each autumn and spring, which is a week full of activities all for new international students. It is a not-to-be-missed opportunity to get to know the campuses, the University and to get all of the official matters out of the way! And at the same time you will make a lot of new friends! You will also be assigned a tutor who is a student at the University and can introduce you to the Finnish student life.
The Welcome Fair during the autumn semester is between August 31st and September 1st 2016 and for the spring semester the corresponding date is January 12th 2017. At the Welcome Fair you can pick up different certificates, get your username for the university’s computer system, sign up for language classes and much more!

Please read more about the Orientation programme here: https://www.helsinki.fi/en/studying/new-students/orientation-and-welcome-fair
Enrolment and registration

Enrolment at University of Helsinki

Exchange students

Exchange students are automatically enrolled at the University of Helsinki once they have been accepted to study at UH.

For exchange students the Student Union fee is voluntary, but it is highly recommended that you become a member of the Student Union. By paying the Student Union fee you can access the student health care services (does not apply to doctoral students), you can order a student card, you get discounts when eating at the Unicafe student cafeterias etc.

For more information, please read the New Students website:

https://university.helsinki.fi/en/studying/new-students/enrolment

Visiting students

You will receive the necessary forms from your faculty. Please follow the instructions issued by your faculty. It is extremely important that you accomplish the enrolment procedure at the university as soon as possible, because no official certification of your studies can be issued before that.

Degree students

Registration for attendance (or nonattendance) is obligatory for all degree students: Bachelor, Master’s and doctoral. Registration for the upcoming academic year starts at the beginning of May and runs usually until August 31. If you fail to register you will lose your right to study.
We strongly advise you to register as soon as possible. The completion of the registration is crucial because no official certification of your studies can be issued by the university before that.

For more detailed instructions for how to register as a new degree student, please see: https://www.helsinki.fi/en/studying/register-as-an-attending-or-non-attending-student

Registering with the authorities

All students coming from EU/EEA countries
Citizens of EU/EEA countries do not need a residence permit or visa, but they do need to apply for a right to reside in Finland at the local police station within three months of arrival. When you register your right to reside in Finland at the local police station, please ask to be registered in the Finnish Population information System. By doing so, you will receive a Finnish personal identity code, which will make your life in Finland easier.

For more information about see the Police’s website: http://www.poliisi.fi/licences_and_permits_for_foreigners/registration_of_a_right_of_residence

Please note that is advisable to make an appointment in advance with the police to complete the registration.

All students from Nordic countries
Citizens of the Nordic countries (Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) are registered at a Register Office if the stay in Finland lasts longer than 6 months. Visit the local register office (maistraatti) and ask to be registered in the Finnish Population Information System. By doing so, you will receive a Finnish personal code, which will make your life in Finland easier.

Degree students

You have to register at the municipal register office (maistraatti). Acquiring a permanent address and a place of domicile (kotikunta) entitles you to enjoy municipal benefits, including, if your studies last over two years, also the right to use municipal health care. You will also receive and official Finnish ID number.

To register at the municipal register office you need to have a proof of:

- Right to reside in Finland: For non EU/EEA citizens this is the residence permit; for EU citizens this is obtained from the police as a certificate of residence.
- Certificate on of the duration of your studies.

Visit the Register office's website for more information and for the contact information of the offices: http://www.maistraatti.fi/en/Services/place_of_domicile_and_population_data/Basic-information/.

Also remember to update your Finnish ID number (henkilötunnus) in the student register once you get it from the municipal register office (maistraatti). You can update your ID number by contacting the Student Services.
Residence permits

For non EU/EEA citizens

You must apply for a residence permit if you plan to study in Finland for longer than three months. EU citizens, citizens of the Nordic countries Liechtenstein and Switzerland do not need a residence permit.

Residence permits are issued by the Finnish Immigration Service MIGRI. You must submit your residence permit application to a Finnish embassy in the country of your legal residence.

Don’t be late from your first semester – start applying for your residence permit as soon as possible before the peak time in July-August/November-December. Start your application for the residence permit at MIGRI’s e-service. This will speed up the processing of your application and you can later access the results of your application online. In addition, you have to visit a Finnish embassy in person to submit your application.

The most common reason for rejecting a residence permit application is the lack of funding. You have to have 560 euro per month (6720 euro per year) on your bank account for the residence permit. Please note that the living expenses in Helsinki are much higher (700-1000 euro per month).

The most common reason for delays in the residence permit application process is insufficient insurance cover. Please note that the insurance requirements vary based on the duration of your stay. Follow the insurance instructions closely and get the right coverage.

The University reports to MIGRI about admitted students who do not show up and start their studies. MIGRI will contact the students about possible cancellation of the residence permit.

Residence permits for students are normally valid for maximum of one year from the issue date: the date of expiration is printed on the permit. If you are studying for several years, a new residence permit is required for each year.
Instructions for degree students can be found here: https://www.helsinki.fi/en/residence-permit-for-degree-students

Instructions for exchange students can be found here: https://www.helsinki.fi/en/residence-permit-for-exchange-students

**Students’ health insurance**

Citizens of non EU/EEA-countries (i.e. students who are not citizens of the EU countries or of Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein or Switzerland) arriving in Finland for the purpose of studying are required to have health insurance, if the period of study lasts for more than three months. The requirement is the same for degree-seeking and for visiting/exchange students. Students from Quebec (Canada) are also exempted from the health insurance requirement.

For more information about health insurance please see: https://www.helsinki.fi/en/health-insurance-and-students
Housing

Reserve time for finding an apartment

Finding suitable accommodation in the capital region can be challenging as there is lack of housing in the area. You should start searching right away when you receive the acceptance letter. The peak time is in the beginning of the academic year. There is no guarantee that you will get a flat – you have to be active yourself.

Be prepared to pay 450-700€ per month

Be prepared to have 700-1000€ for living expenses per month of which 450-700€ per month for housing. For the residence permit you are required to have 560€ per month on your bank account but this is not enough for living in Helsinki.

Apply for an apartment simultaneously through various channels If you get a housing offer – take it! You probably won’t get another offer and there is no temporary housing available.

Be prepared to live further away from the centre or campus areas The public transport in Helsinki is ranked among the best in Europe. You can check the transport connections from your apartment to the campus from the Helsinki Region Transport Journey Planner http://www.reittiopas.fi/en/

Find flat mates! Get in touch with other new international students and potential flat mates through Facebook, for example on the New Students’ Facebook-page: https://www.facebook.com/newstudentsuh or in the Apartments for students in Helsinki Facebook group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/112489548797522/.

Never send money or your passport information to anyone Do not send this information to anyone on the open market before you have seen the apartment and signed a contract! An offer that sounds too good to be true (e.g. a studio flat under 500 euro in the centre) is usually a scam.

Cancel unnecessary applications

Remember to cancel the unnecessary applications after finding accommodation, because there are
other students needing housing in the queue.

**Housing options**

Below are a few options for where to look for housing. Some options are targeted only for students and some are open market options.

**HOAS – the foundation for student housing in the Helsinki region**

HOAS is a non-profit organisation providing student housing in the Helsinki region. For arriving students, HOAS offers rooms in shared apartments as well as family apartments and friend apartments.

If you are a degree or visiting student, you apply for HOAS directly through the HOAS website. Instructions for exchange students, see below.

It is advisable to apply for an apartment as soon as you receive a confirmation of your place to study – but no sooner than four months before you need the apartment. Your possibilities to receive an apartment from HOAS are improved if you are willing to live outside the city centre and campus areas.

However, please remember that applying as soon as possible does not guarantee that you will get an apartment when your studies begin! HOAS cannot guarantee housing for all students. If you haven’t received an offer by mid-August it is likely that you won’t get a flat from HOAS by the beginning of September.

If you get a housing offer from HOAS, there will be a mention about the beginning of your tenancy period on the offer. Most HOAS contracts start in August but some locations the tenancy period starts September 1st. You are expected to arrive in Helsinki before the Welcome Fair and orientation programme begins. If your tenancy period starts on September 1st, please make sure that you have booked a hostel or other accommodation for the last days of August.
The housing offer also includes the information on when you need to send/give HOAS an official certificate of your student status. If you have any questions about this or need an extension to the deadline, please contact HOAS directly.

HOAS website: [http://www.hoas.fi/en/](http://www.hoas.fi/en/). Hoas also has a Facebook page where you can e.g. ask questions. [http://www.facebook.com/hoashelsinki](http://www.facebook.com/hoashelsinki)

**Housing Option for Degree Students**

The University of Helsinki has a housing quota for Master’s degree students that are moving to Finland. There housing option for Master’s degree students consist of single rooms available in share apartments within good connections to our campuses and the city centre – and for a reasonable price! More information can be found here: [https://www.helsinki.fi/en/housing-option-for-international-masters-degree-students](https://www.helsinki.fi/en/housing-option-for-international-masters-degree-students)

For more information about finding housing and other housing options, please visit: [https://www.helsinki.fi/en/studying/new-students/housing](https://www.helsinki.fi/en/studying/new-students/housing)

**Housing Option for Exchange Students**

Exchange students coming through an official exchange programme apply for housing through a separate housing application in the Mobility Online application system.

Applicants fill in one housing application in Mobility Online for both Unihome and HOAS locations.

The applications will be handled after the acceptance process is finished. If Unihome / HOAS offers you housing, the housing offer will be sent to you by e-mail (usually latest by 15.7. if you apply for the autumn semester or by 30.11. if you apply for the spring).
Housing reservations will be made in co-operation between Unihome and HOAS and you can receive only one housing offer.

Please note that Unihome / HOAS does not have the possibility to answer individual inquiries and that housing can not be guaranteed for all exchange students.

Please read more here: [https://www.helsinki.fi/en/the-application-for-student-exchange#section-7296](https://www.helsinki.fi/en/the-application-for-student-exchange#section-7296)

**No apartment before arriving in Finland?**
If you haven’t received a housing offer by mid-August it is likely that you won’t get a flat by the beginning of September. In this case it can be a good idea to secure yourself temporary accommodation for the whole of September right away. Most flats and rooms are vacant from the beginning of the month. For suggestions for short-term housing options please see: [https://www.helsinki.fi/en/studying/new-students/housing#section-396](https://www.helsinki.fi/en/studying/new-students/housing#section-396).

**Contact us**
If the semester is already about to start and you still haven’t managed to find a place to stay you can contact the University of Helsinki’s Student Services at [studentinfo@helsinki.fi](mailto:studentinfo@helsinki.fi)

Please note that the University of Helsinki does not provide accommodation for students and we cannot guarantee that you will find a place to stay – but we will do our best to inform our students about different providers of housing and possible last minute housing options.
University Services and Facilities

International Exchange Services

The International Exchange Services provides services for both incoming and outgoing exchange students at the University of Helsinki. Please contact or visit us if you have questions about regarding your exchange or if you are interested in hearing more about different exchange programmes and opportunities!

The international Exchange Office is represented on each campus in conjunction with the local Student Services. Please look for the address of your campus’ Student Services here: https://www.helsinki.fi/en/studying/contact-us/student-services

Our office hours are: Mondays and Thursdays 12-14

How to contact us:

Erasmus Programme and Exchanges
studentexchange@helsinki.fi
+358 2941 22441

Nordplus Programme and Exchanges
studentexchange@helsinki.fi
+358 2941 22178

University wide Exchange Programmes and Exchanges (University level Bilateral Agreements, ISEP, AEN, MAUI, N”N Etc.)
studentexchange@helsinki.fi
+358 2941 22241
Website for incoming students
https://university.helsinki.fi/en/studying/new-students

Blog for incoming students
https://blogs.helsinki.fi/welcometouh

UH in Facebook

International Admissions Services
Admissions Services provides service for applicants for degree programmes and coordinates the admission procedure at the University of Helsinki.

For more information and contact details please see: https://www.helsinki.fi/en/studying/contact-us/admissions-services

Student Services
The Student Services provides services for all students at the University, including students at the Open University. Offices of the Student Services are located on the four campuses of the University of Helsinki. They act as gateways to the services at the University and they can help you find the right person or office.

The Student Services supply student calendars upon proof of university acceptance and Student Union membership payment. You may also acquire certificates of attendance, discount coupons for
transportation and travel, as well as authorised certificates for various purposes at the Student Services. Annual registrations are also carried out at the Student Services.

If you need to pick up your student card, please note that it has to be picked up at the Student Union Services Office in the New Student House.

For more information about the services and opening hours, please see: https://www.helsinki.fi/en/studying/contact-us/student-services

Career Services

The Career Services will guide and support you from the very start of your studies during your first year at the University of Helsinki until one year after the completion of your degree. Career Services provide career guidance, career counselling, courses, and information on the opportunities offered by the labour market.

For more information about the services and how to book an appointment for career counselling, please see: https://www.helsinki.fi/en/studying/contact-us/career-services

Flamma – the University intranet

Flamma, the University of Helsinki Intranet, is a joint communication channel and personal work tool for all students and staff members of the University of Helsinki. One of the basic principles is that all internal communication within the University should be done through Flamma.

You need a University of Helsinki user account to use the Intranet. Upon login you will see a layout customised according to your department, faculty, and your status at the University e.g. student. You
can access your University e-mail and, for instance, the study information system WebOodi, with the same single login. Flamma is also an information retrieval system organised according to various topics or functions in to information channels: i.e. For Students, For Teachers etc. You can also gather links of your own interest in one place.

Flamma is also a communication channel. Through Flamma, you receive news and information about common issues on department or faculty levels, or throughout the whole University, you can discuss and exchange information in work group areas only visible to group members. You can access Flamma through: https://flamma.helsinki.fi/.

Each student is also provided with an @helsinki.fi e-mail address.

WebOodi

WebOodi is an electronic information system where you as a student can: complete the annual registration to the university, see degree requirements, browse through study guides and courses on offer, register for courses and examinations, check your credits and order an unofficial transcript of your credits, and give course feedback.

You can also update your contact information through WebOodi; as a student you must make sure that your address and phone number are up-to-date in the student register.

WebOodi can be found at https://weboodi.helsinki.fi/hy/ and you can use it both from home and on campus. You log in to WebOodi with the same user name and password, which you use to log in to your university email account and the university intranet. Instructions for using WebOodi can be found within the system.
My studies

My Studies is your own page for courses, interesting content, and other services offered by the University. Use your university user account to sign in here: https://student.helsinki.fi/info/login

IT services and support

The IT Centre produces and offers students and personnel IT services at the university. For more information please see: http://www.helsinki.fi/atk/english/

For IT support and guidance please turn to the Helpdesk: http://www.helsinki.fi/helpdesk/eng

The University Library

The extensive electronic and printed collections and services of the Helsinki University library are available to you and to anyone else.

How to access online resources Access e-resources, such as databases, electronic journals and e-books via - the website of the library, www.helsinki.fi/kirjasto/en/ or - the Nelli information seeking portal, www.nelliportaali.fi or - browse e-books in the BookNavigator, www.terkko.helsinki.fi/booknavigator

To reserve, borrow and renew materials, you need a Helsinki University Library's Helka card. You can get a library card from the library the first time you take out a loan by presenting a passport and a certificate of attendance.

Library locations and contact information The Helsinki University Library comprises the City Centre, Kumpula, Meilahti and Viikki campus libraries. Information about collections and services is available via the website of the Helsinki University Library, www.helsinki.fi/kirjasto/en/
System of studies

Academic year and teaching periods

The academic year at the University of Helsinki runs from August 1 until July 31, the autumn term lasting from August 1 till the end of December and spring term from January 1 till the end of July. These are the official dates; the real teaching periods are explained below.

The academic year is divided into four seven-week teaching periods – each beginning and ending simultaneously throughout the University. There is an examination and independent study week between the periods in autumn and spring and a longer break at Christmas time and during the summer. Teaching organised in the summer does not belong to the teaching periods. Examinations and special courses may, however, be arranged outside the teaching periods.

The teaching periods listed below apply to all Faculties except the Faculty of Medicine. Please check the exact dates for your Faculty's teaching from the Faculty.

Teaching periods of the 2016 - 2017 academic year

Autumn term

Intensive period 29.8.-4.9.

I teaching period 5.9.-23.10.

Examination and independent study week 24.10.-30.10.

II teaching period 31.10.-18.12.

Examination and independent study week 19.12.-23.12.
Spring term

Intensive period 2.1.-15.1.

III teaching period 16.1.-5.3.

Examination and independent study week 6.3.-12.3.

IV teaching period 13.3.-7.5.

Examination and independent study week 8.5.-14.5.

Intensive period 8.5.-31.5.

Courses in English

A good starting point to access information on the courses offered in English is the Courses in English website https://www.helsinki.fi/en/studying/new-students/courses-in-english You can also find courses through the electronic information system WebOodi https://weboodi.helsinki.fi/hy/ There you can search for courses using different criteria – one search criteria is by language of instruction. Updates on courses are posted on the individual Faculty's or Department's website or in WebOodi.

Ways of completing studies

There are two basic ways of completing studies at the University of Helsinki: lecture courses and book exams. Students taking a lecture course must pass a final examination at any one of the scheduled examination dates after attending the course. Students taking a book exam must pass a faculty examination (tiedekuntatentti) or a period examination (perioditentti) at any one of the scheduled dates during the academic year: usually there is one examination each month. Although there is no summer term, some departments also arrange examinations in the summer.

Many departments accept tests written in English. Often students can also arrange to write a research
paper, essay or a study diary in place of a written examination, but this varies according to field of study. Examination dates are set before the academic year begins and there may be multiple dates. International students often choose book exams in order to bypass a lecture series arranged in Finnish and/or to read the material at their own pace. Today almost all registrations for examinations are done in WebOodi. Be prepared to prove your identity.

Other typical ways of completing a course are seminar groups and other small groups, in which students get accustomed to independent research. Oral examinations are unusual. On-line study and examination options are growing rapidly. One outstanding feature in studies at the University of Helsinki is the emphasis on the student’s own initiative and individual work.

Languages used in teaching

The languages of instruction at the University of Helsinki are Finnish and Swedish. Finnish is the main language of instruction, whereas Swedish is used in a number of degree programmes and major subjects. Today, one of the focal areas is International Master’s level programmes. A number of seminars and lecture series are offered in English on a regular basis, particularly at the Master’s level. It is usually possible to complete courses through independent study when no instruction in English is available. Please note that in Foreign Language Degree Programmes translation into mother tongue (äidinkielelle) means into Finnish or Swedish.

Credit system

In the credit system, the student workload is 1600 hours per year, which is worth 60 credits in completed studies. Consequently, the Bachelor’s degree (180 credits) should be completed in three years and the Master’s degree (120 credits) should be completed in two years. The annual student workload of 1600 hours is the same as the annual workload of university teachers.
Grades

The general grading scale used at the University is a six-stage scale. It ranges from zero (0 = fail) to five (5 = excellent). Traditions are being upheld in the grading of the Master’s thesis, which is graded on a scale using the Latin language. Degree certificates are accompanied by a supplement (the Diploma Supplement), which describes the contents of the degree. The purpose of this supplement is to improve the international comparability of degrees and facilitate mobility for either doctoral study or employment.

Transcripts

In the WebOodi information system you can see your credits in real time. If the transcript is not complete and there are courses missing, please contact the department that arranged the course. Normally courses should be registered in a few weeks and within a month at the latest.

All students, both current and former ones, can receive and official transcript of the credits completed at the University of Helsinki. Within the University the unofficial transcript is also accepted. You can order the unofficial transcript through the WebOodi information system.

A certificate of student status, i.e. a student certificate, is also available at the Student Services.

Official transcript

Attending students can receive one official transcript free of charge per term, issued in Finnish, Swedish or English, at the Student Services. For contact information and opening hours of the Student Services, please see https://university.helsinki.fi/en/studying/contact-us/student-services

Exchange and visiting students: Do not forget to check that you have all of your courses registered before you take the free official transcript. You can see your credits in real-time in WebOodi.

For additional transcripts, you have to pay 4.00 euro or 8.00 euro per printout. You cannot pay the transcript payment in cash at the Student Services: it has to be paid in advance.
For further information on how to order transcripts by mail, and the prices, please see

Student organisations and Student card

Because of the individual nature of university studies, much of the institution's social life must be sought after; it is not readily apparent at first.

The student organisations very active, arranging different kinds of activities. Many activities are open to all university students and advertisements for them are posted on the large notice boards in the Main Building (päärakennus) and Porthania or online. Unfortunately, most announcements are in Finnish.

In order to get to know the people of your department, join the e-mail list of your department and keep an eye on the department notice boards for announcements.

Relevant websites: [http://hyy.helsinki.fi/en](http://hyy.helsinki.fi/en) (Student Union of UH)

**ESN (Erasmus Student Network)**

ESN Uni Helsinki is the biggest local sections of ESN in Helsinki. ESN will help you to get the most out of the student life in Helsinki. ESN Uni Helsinki provides cultural and social events for the exchange students: city tours, sport events, pub crawls, knitting workshop, parties, sauna evenings and excursions. Find us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/uni.helsinki.ESN](http://www.facebook.com/uni.helsinki.ESN)

You can also become an active member, join the team and help us to organize these events. It is a chance to learn more about Finnish student life! You can send an email to board@esnunihelsinki.org

**Student Union (HYY)**

Helsingin yliopiston ylioppilaskunta (HYY)
HYY Services Office
Mannerheimintie 5 A, 2nd floor
00100 Helsinki

Tel. +358 50 551 6146 info@hyy.fi [www.hyy.fi](http://www.hyy.fi)
One of the best things studying at the University of Helsinki is its active community of students, the Student Union of the University of Helsinki. HYY represents students, looks after their interests and provides friends and benefits.

**Membership, Benefits and Services**

By being a member of the Student Union you gain several important discounts and services such as discounts in all the Unicafe student restaurants, and access to the Finnish Student Health Services (FSHS). All degree students registered at the University of Helsinki are automatically members of HYY, and exchange students are also warmly welcome to join and enjoy the benefits of membership!

The membership fee for the entire academic year 2015-2016 is 103 € (or 53 € for the autumn term and 50 € for the spring term alone).

More information on joining the Student Union: [www.hyy.fi/join](http://www.hyy.fi/join)

**Activities**

There are more than 250 different student organisations within the Student Union. From sports clubs and photography associations to faculty organisations, there is something for everyone! Both the Student Union and the organisations arrange several events and parties throughout the year.

**The Freshman Guide**

Read more about student life in Helsinki from Freshman Guide published by HYY. You can find a complete list of all member benefits and services on HYY’s website: [www.hyy.fi/memberservices](http://www.hyy.fi/memberservices)

**Student Organisations within HYY**

The student organisation culture is exceptionally rich and diverse in Finland and in Helsinki. Over 250 different student organisations within HYY open a field of opportunities and make sure you find the right people for right activities. Participating in organisations and their events is a great way to network and meet people, make friends, have fun, learn new skills, challenge yourself and make the most of your
student life. There is something for everyone: from sport clubs and photography associations to faculty organisations and student nations. You can find more information about organisations on HYY’s website: www.hyy.fi/organisations

Influencing in HYY

In the Student Union, you can make a difference in many ways. You can join committee activities, give feedback to the Board or the members of the Representative Council or aim at decision-making yourself. The easiest way to influence is to vote in the Representative Council elections, which are held every two years.

Student card

Membership of the Student Union (HYY) provides you with many benefits and services. One of the major benefits of membership is a student card, providing you services on campus and discounts all around the country.

The Student Card is a smart card with the following information and features:

- Your picture
- Your personal information: name, date of birth and student number
- Your school-specific information: university, faculty and student union
- A year tag: this is required to prove card validity

Benefits and discounts

As a student, you are entitled to a significant student meal discount by showing your Student Card in student restaurants. You will also get an extra discount in the cafeterias inside the University (UniCafes). These meal prices will prove valuable when you compare them to Helsinki’s restaurants.

In addition, with the exception of doctoral students, you’ll have convenient access to the services provided by the Finnish Student Health Services (FSHS). Consultations with general practitioners are free of charge, while specialist physician services are provided at a low cost.
Carry your Student Card with you at all times – you may stumble upon discount opportunities anywhere! The card provides you with deals on school supplies, travel, local transportation, long distance railway and bus travel, and also culture events and entry fees.

For more information about the student card, please see: http://hyy.helsinki.fi/en/students/student-card-and-year-tag

**Student health care**

*Finnish Student Health Service - Better Student Health*

An important aspect of taking care of your wellbeing is to seek help from health care professionals early enough. During your studies you can turn to the FSHS for issues related to health and ill health. FSHS provides general, mental and oral health care services. Many of our services are free of charge. You can use our services if you are studying for a Bachelor’s or Master’s degree at a university or other institution of higher education and you have paid your student union membership fee to a student union that is affiliated to the FSHS. Those studying for a Licentiate of Medicine, Dentistry or Veterinary Medicine degree are also entitled to use the FSHS’s services. International university students are also entitled to use FSHS services, provided that they have paid the annual health care fee as part of their student union membership fee.

For more information on the FSHS services, opening hours, possible fees please see: http://www.yths.fi/en/internationalstudents

**Transportation discounts**

Bachelor and Master’s students are entitled to discounts in local transportation as well as on railways and long distance coaches.

Bachelor and Master’s students as well as exchange students, under the age of 30 and living in Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa, Kaunianen, Kerava, Kirkkonummi or Sipoo, are usually entitled to a student
discount on their travel card. Students aged 30 or over must receive Student Financial Aid from the Finnish Social Security Institution (KELA) in order for them to be granted the student discount on the local transportation system in the Helsinki metropolitan Area.

Degree students have to register as permanent residents of the municipality at the Register Office before the student discount can be granted. Before buying the travel card you need to obtain a certificate proving your degree student status, which is available at the Student Services and at the Welcome Fair.

Exchange students need to obtain a certificate proving the exchange student status before buying the card. The certificate is available at the Student Services and the Welcome Fair as well.

More information on the Travel card and ticket prices can be found on the Helsinki Region Transport (HSL) website: http://www.hsl.fi/en

**Unisport**

Unisport is a joint venture between the University of Helsinki and Aalto University offering sports and exercise services. Our goal is to promote wellbeing in the academic community and society in general by increasing awareness of personal wellbeing, providing sports and exercise opportunities as well as fostering an environment conducive to exercise. Unisport offers meeting spots for members of the academic community at the two universities' six campuses. Unisport provides everything an active, or one about to become that, person requires.

A Training Card is the best exercise companion that you can have. A Training Card gives you access to all gyms on all campuses from morning to evening. You can participate in group fitness sessions as well as ball sports practices and clinics.

On our campuses there are different kinds of sports grounds and gyms, and you can book time in a gym for yourself or your group. Take friends or people from your course to play badminton or floor ball, or even dance. Courses in various sports guarantee an easy way of getting to know new sports or leaning more - from jazz dance to weightlifting. The courses are chargeable.
For more information about UniSport see: www.unisport.fi
Tuition fees, scholarships and living costs

In Finland, annual tuition fees will be introduced to foreign-language Bachelor’s and Master’s programmes starting on August 1, 2017. Citizens of non-EU/EEA countries, who do not have a permanent residence status in the area, are liable to these fees.

With the introduction of fees, the University of Helsinki offers scholarships to students coming from non-EU/EEA countries. Funding options will range from full scholarships to partial fee waivers and cost-of-living grants.

For more information about tuition fees and scholarships please see: https://www.helsinki.fi/en/studying/how-to-apply/tuition-fees-and-scholarships

Grants and scholarships

There is a wide range of grants and scholarships offered by the University of Helsinki and other institutions for undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students. However, there are a very limited number of scholarships or grants that could cover the full financing your studies! The majority of the grants offered by the University of Helsinki and other institutions are relatively small, ranging anything from 150 euro to 2000 euro.

A good way to start is to ask about grants and scholarships from a professor or a teacher in your own department. In addition, your fellow students might have some good ideas. As the range of different grants and scholarships is wide and many of them are meant for a limited field of study it is very hard for anyone outside your field of study to give hints or suggestions on suitable grants or scholarships to apply for. However, below you will find information designed to guide you through it.

Exchange students: (i.e. students who register for a limited period studies through an exchange programme) can ask their home university about scholarships for outgoings students. Home universities inform students about funding opportunities for their own exchange students. Erasmus and Nordplus
grants are always awarded to students in their home country. Please contact the International Affairs or equivalent at your home institution or your own department for more information on grants and other benefits they may be offering.

Visiting students: who come to study at the University outside the exchange programmes or without any institutional or departmental agreements between their home institution and the University of Helsinki, have to finance their studies themselves.

Degree students: must arrange funding themselves. Look for the possibilities at home. Is there a student financial aid system in your country? What about grants and scholarships for studying abroad?

For more information about grants and scholarships please see: https://www.helsinki.fi/en/studying/new-students/costs-and-finance#section-324

Cost of living

All students have to pay for their accommodation and living expenses as well as their books and other study materials. The total living expenses of a single student range from 700 to 1000 euro per month - depending on your spending habits.

For rent in a student dormitory and residence hall you should budget about 400 euro a month (in a single room). The rent for a studio or family flat is higher; it ranges from 500 to 850 euro a month depending on the flat and the location.

Lunch at the Unicafe student cafeterias costs between 2,60 and 4,95 euro for undergraduate and graduate students, for doctoral students the cost is 4,70 to 6,90 euro. The price depends on the lunch.

Local transportation costs are about 26,20 euro / 30-days travels in Helsinki and 51,20 euro / 30-days regional travels from Espoo and Vantaa to Helsinki (prices shown include the student discount which is available to undergraduate and graduate students under the age of 30).
Your student status, and especially the Student Union membership, entitles mainly undergraduate and graduate students to various services at affordable prices as well as to an abundance of student discounts. The discounts for doctoral (Ph.D.) students are more limited.

Is a student allowed to work while studying? Students who have a residence permit granted on the basis of studying may engage in gainful employment without restrictions when the work consists of practical training or diploma work as part of a degree.

During study terms when actual instruction is being given, you are allowed to do an average of 25 hours of part-time work weekly. The number of working hours is not restricted weekly but the restriction concerns each term during which work can be periodised according to the situation. During holidays, i.e. during summer and Christmas holidays, you can work full-time without hourly restrictions.

Income from part-time work done during study terms may be taken into account in a discretionary manner in assessing the amount of available means required for livelihood. However, this is not possible in the case of first residence permits.

Citizens of EU/EEA- countries or Nordic countries can work without restrictions during the studies. You will also require a Finnish personal identity code (henkilötunnus) and a tax card (verokortti).