



Unil © Felix Imhof

On exchange at Unil

The University of Lausanne is a Swiss state university that focuses on Life Sciences, Geosciences, Environment, Business, Medicine, Humanities and Social Sciences. Unil is a research-intensive university that encourages interdisciplinarity.

Unil is situated at the heart of the French-speaking region of Switzerland, in the centre of Western Europe. It welcomes approximately 500 exchange students every year.

Faculties

Unil is composed of seven faculties which offer the following subjects:

Theology and Sciences of Religions

- Theology
- Study of Religions

Law, Criminal Justice and Public Administration

- Law
- Forensic Science
- Public Administration

Arts

Ancient Greek, Ancient History, Archaeology, Computer Science for the Humanities, English, French as a Foreign Language, German, History, History and Aesthetics of Film, History of Arts, History of Religions, Italian, Latin, Linguistics,

Medieval French, Modern French, Philosophy, Slavic Studies, South Asian Languages and Cultures, Spanish

Social and Political Sciences

- Social Sciences
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Sports Sciences

Business and Economics (HEC Lausanne)

- Management
- Economics
- Finance
- Actuarial Sciences
- Information Systems

Geosciences and Environment

- Earth Sciences
- Geography
- Sustainability
- Environmental Sciences

Biology and Medicine

- Biology
- Medicine
- Nursing Sciences

Courses taught in English:

Undergraduate

- Business and Economics
- English Literature
- Life Sciences (spring semester)

Quick facts

Founded

1537, university status since 1890

Status

State university

Location

Lausanne, Switzerland

Local language

French (same as in France)

Teaching language

French, English for some programmes

Student enrolment

17,000 (of whom 8,400 Bachelor, 5,400 Master and 2,500 PhD students)

Cosmopolitan environment

26% international students
51% international academic staff

Full-time academic staff

2,530 (of whom 570 full professors)

Degrees awarded

Bachelor, Master, Doctorate, Executive degrees

Nobel laureate

Jacques Dubochet (Chemistry, 2017)

Rankings

Between 130th and 200th in THE, QS and Shanghai

Annual budget

CHF 709.8 million

Graduate

- Actuarial Science
- Earth Sciences
- Economics
- English Literature
- Environmental Sciences
- Finance
- Management

Restricted courses

Courses offered by the following units/programmes are not available to exchange students:

- School of Medicine (except for specific SEMP agreements)
- School of Criminal Justice (except for Master of Law in Criminology and Security)
- Master's programs in Biology
- MSc in Accounting, Control and Finance
- Executive programmes

Some practical assignments, seminars or lab courses may have limited places with priority given to degree-seeking students.

Study French

- Free part-time French language courses are available during the academic semester.
- Fee-paying intensive courses in French are offered during the university holidays in July, August and February.

Academic calendar 2026-2027

Autumn semester

Orientation: 10 September 2026
Classes begin: 14 September 2026
Classes end: 18 December 2026
Exams: 15 January - 6 February 2027

Spring semester

Orientation: 19 February 2027
Classes begin: 22 February 2027
Classes end: 4 June 2027
Exams: 14 June - 10 July 2027

How to apply

Application

You must be nominated by the International Office of your university.

Requirements

- Level B2 in French and/or English depending on the courses chosen. Basic French skills are recommended for daily life and social

- integration.
- No minimum GPA is required.

Living in Lausanne

Housing

Studios and rooms in shared apartments are available in university residences in the city or on campus. The monthly rent is between CHF 700 to 900 depending on the type of accommodation and the location. Priority is given to incoming exchange students from overseas, then from Europe. Send your application by the deadline!

Private housing is available, but finding accommodation in Lausanne is currently difficult.

Cost of living

A budget of around CHF 2,100 per month is recommended to live in Lausanne:

- Food and living expenses: 850-900
- Accommodation (without utilities): 700-900
- Health and accident insurance: 150-300
- Books and course material: 100-150

Working in Switzerland

Students with a B or L permit, holding a valid residence permit, and enrolled with Unil can work part-time during term time and full-time during the holidays. Non-EU citizens must wait 6 months from their arrival in Switzerland before getting a job.

Social activities at Unil

Sports

More than 120 sports activities are available on campus or in the city for free or for a small fee.

Student associations

The local Erasmus Student Network (ESN Unil) organises a buddy programme and social activities for all exchange students. Numerous student associations are active in various fields.

More info



Lausanne and its surroundings

Lausanne benefits from a wealth of opportunities for leisure, outings and excursions. Its privileged location at the heart of Europe places it close to numerous prestigious destinations, such as Paris or Milan (both less than 4 hours by train from Lausanne).

A city of culture

Classic, historic, innovative and cutting edge, Lausanne's museums offer an incredible variety of exhibitions in every genre enriched by a colourful cultural calendar. And do not forget to visit the Cathedral, one of the most beautiful Gothic buildings in Switzerland. Be brave and admire the panoramic view from the belfry, after climbing the 224 steps...

The Olympic capital

Unique in the world, the Olympic Museum is one of Lausanne's main attractions. Each of its three levels is dedicated to a particular aspect of modern Olympism. You may need several visits to explore everything.

Lavaux vineyards

Take a walk through one of the most beautiful sceneries in Switzerland. The UNESCO-listed Lavaux vineyard terraces are criss-crossed with trails with stunning views over Lake Geneva and the Alps. And, of course, you can take the opportunity to sample the local produce in the vineyard's wine cellars.

Outdoor activities

With its huge network of trails, Switzerland is a real paradise for hikers. These excellently marked trails guide you along paths affording breathtaking views. In winter, skiing is one of the main attractions, of course, but you also have the option to tackle the slopes on a toboggan or sledge!

Evenings in Lausanne

Head out to the Flon and its many bars. There is something here for everyone. If you are in the mood, choose one of the city's numerous trendy clubs to dance until dawn!

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