

iPSRS

Welcome Guide

2026–2028 Cohort

Congratulations on joining the iPSRS Program. You've unlocked an incredible opportunity to be part of a vibrant international community. Follow iPSRS on social media for updates. It is especially useful to see how others are doing, there are posts about social activities, internships, and other news!

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/ipsrs.emjm/>

Linked in: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/ipsrs-emjm/posts/?feedView=a>

This guide was collaboratively written by the 2024–2026 and 2025–2027 cohorts, building on the work of the 2020–2022, 2021–2023, 2022–2024, and 2023–2025 cohorts. We hope this tradition continues with every new intake. Cordially, iPSRS 2024–2026 and 2025–2027 cohorts.

Our Community

denotes student representative. UJM = Photonics & Machine Learning • UPEC = Biometrics & Intelligent Vision • PoliTo = Micro-nano-technological Devices • VU = Condensed Matter Photonics

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Before Arrival

Checklist

- ☐ Apply for a visa
- ☐ Book accommodation
- ☐ Book a flight
- ☐ Translate your birth certificate into French
- ☐ Prepare your luggage
- ☐ Budget for at least 2 months before your first allowance
- ☐ Download the prerequisites document and study it before arrival

Visa

- EU students do not need a specific visa to study in France.
- Non-EU students must apply for a visa; some countries must go through Campus France first.
- Begin your application as soon as you have your admission letter and certificate of residence.
- Declare your Erasmus Mundus scholarship when applying — this may waive the visa fee.
- Select a long-stay visa (12 months).

Useful links: master-photonics4security.eu/visa-application • campusfrance.org • france-visas.gouv.fr

Accommodation

Rent ranges from 200 to 600+ euros per month. The table below summarises options used by previous cohorts. You can also browse CROUS residences at en.location-etudiant.fr/resultat-crous-saint-etienne-42100.html.

Two additional affordable platforms worth checking: La Carte des Colocs (lacartesdescolocs.fr) — speak directly with landlords, usually includes utilities, around €350/mo fully equipped; and Manda (manda.fr) — very low rents (250–300€/mo), fully equipped, but registration fee is non-refundable.

RESIDENCE	PROS	CONS
Neoresid Bellevue 350–370€/mo +400€ deposit	Fully furnished. CAF ~200€/mo. Direct tram T1 to campus. Good internet. Water & garbage included. Close to Centre Deux, pharmacy, La Poste.	Electricity ~100€/mo in winter. Small bed, no kitchen hood. Poor noise insulation. Rooms on lower floors facing street are noisy. 100€ application fee.
Residence des Arts Gambetta ~529€/mo	Complete kitchen tools. 100 Mbps internet included. City centre. Tram at doorstep. English-speaking managers. Bed linen changed every ~20 days.	Expensive. CAF paid via CROUS (slow/complicated). Main manager often unresponsive.
Le Litre 32 Rue Le Littré	Furnished 20m ² . Friendly manager (email preferred, no English). Quiet. CAF ~147€/mo. Water & garbage included. No strict restrictions.	Very poor internet. Oldest residence — worst heating. Stove slow to heat up. Steep uphill road from tram. ~1km to Auchan. Laundry €5.50/use. No

RESIDENCE	PROS	CONS
350–360€/mo + electricity (avg total ~420€/mo)		common area. 175€ application fee. Electricity avg €60/mo (Ekwateur).
Neoresid Trefilerie 366–436€/mo+ deposit +~200€ application fee	Furnished 17–30m². In front of UJM Tréfilerie campus. Quiet. Direct tram to campus. Near Centre Deux & Auchan. Good CROUS cafeteria & library nearby. Microwave. Kind manager. Accepts Visale. Internet available.	Electricity not included (expensive in winter). Kitchen utensils depend on the previous tenant. No pillow provided. Bed size is random regardless of apartment size. Laundry on ground floor (~€3 wash, €2 dry). Clean thoroughly when leaving or the deposit may not be returned.
Les Estudines Jules Ferry 370–400€/mo +deposit	Furnished 18m². Warm managers. 3 min from shops. No noise. Linen provided & changed every 2 weeks. Direct tram T1.	Electricity not included. Laundry tokens (~€3 wash + €3 dry). 4km from campus. Home insurance certificate needed (~€20).
Gestetud Campus Design Jouffroy ~500€/mo +450€ deposit	5-minute walk from campus. Furnished studio 18m². English-speaking manager, always available. Bus & tram nearby. Lidl, pharmacy & Sunday flea market close. CAF ~243€/mo. Reliable internet. Washing/drying on-site.	Electricity not included. Laundry for a fee (~€3 wash, €2 dry). 6-month home insurance required (Adele).
UXCO Greenbreak 425–550€/mo +deposit	Fully furnished. Close to Lidl & city centre. Fast internet. Small gym. Spacious common room. CAF ~243€/mo.	Electricity not included (TotalEnergies). Garantie guarantee required (Visale not accepted). The building can be unclean.
Shared Apartments 68 rue Francis Baulier ~850€/mo +850€ deposit	Fully furnished. Near bus & tram stations, supermarkets. Good internet. Close to Centre Deux, pharmacy.	Small CAF (~92€/mo). May charge extra for utilities despite claiming inclusive. Poor deposit return.
5 Rue Bergson ~375€/mo (300+75 services)	Fully furnished (washing machine, oven, microwave). Near bus & tram, park, supermarkets, bakeries. 10-min walk from school. Friendly landlord. No application fee.	Slow wifi. House insurance required. Old building — floors may be squeaky.
Shared Apartments(La Carte des Colocs / Manda) ~250–350€/mo	Most affordable option. Fully equipped. Normally no extra fees for electricity, heating or gas on La Carte des Colocs. Manda has very low rents (250–300€).	Manda has a non-refundable registration fee. Always verify listings before booking.

Flights & Luggage

- Book your flight after receiving your visa.
- Qatar Airways, Vistara, Gulf Air, and Ryanair offer student benefits — qatarairways.com/en/student-club.html.
- Air France may also offer student discounts and flexible date changes.
- Maximum 23 kg per checked bag within Europe — overweight fees are steep.
- If coming from a tropical country, pack light on summer clothes and leave room for winter gear.
- A European plug adapter may be needed. French keyboards are AZERTY, not QWERTY.

Birth Certificate Translation

Translate your birth certificate into French before arrival. Required for CAF and several other administrative procedures. We strongly recommend doing this even if not explicitly asked.

Budgeting Before Your First Allowance

- Scholarship payments take more than 1 month to arrive — be prepared for up to 2 months with no scholarship.
- Expected costs: rent, deposit, SIM card, groceries, transport, electricity, bed linen, kitchen utensils.

Academic Preparation

- Download the prerequisites document from the programme website and review the topic list before you arrive. The schedule in France becomes hectic very quickly — having covered the basics beforehand will be a significant advantage.

After Arrival

Checklist

- ❑ Contact EDF for electricity (if your residence requires it)
- ❑ Buy necessary household items
- ❑ Validate your visa online
- ❑ Buy a transportation card
- ❑ Open a bank account
- ❑ Buy a SIM card
- ❑ Register for a Social Security Number
- ❑ Apply for CAF housing allowance

Electricity (EDF)

- Some residences require you to set up your own EDF contract. It takes about 1 day to get electricity connected.
- English-speaking international line: +33 9 69 36 63 83. Have the room address and previous tenant details from your manager ready.
- If in France without a phone yet, call via Skype credits.
- Ask 2nd-year iPSRS students for help — some return to Saint-Étienne in semester 3.
- You can save 30–40% on electricity bills by switching providers. Use Hello Watt (hellowatt.fr) to compare rates for your address.

Buying Necessities

- Pop's Shop (UJM campus) — cheap second-hand and new household items: pillows, blankets, kitchen gear. Tuesdays and Thursdays only — check the schedule.
- Auchan and other supermarkets have everything else. Use Google Translate for French product labels.
- For second-hand winter clothes and shoes, search “Friperie” on Google Maps — you can find high-quality items at great prices.
- Buy only what you need — you will move every semester during Year 1.

Validating Your Visa

- One-year visa: validate online at administration-etrangers-en-france.interieur.gouv.fr
- Three-month visa: apply for a residence permit before it expires at welcometofrance.com/en/fiche/long-stay-visa. Do this immediately on arrival.
- Welcome Desk for international students (Facebook: SWDsaintetienne) can guide you.
- You can take your official residence permit photo at the photobooth on the second floor of Centre Deux shopping mall.

Transportation Card

- Single ticket: 1.40€. Ten-journey book: 10€. Valid for 90 minutes on all bus and tram lines.
- After getting your student card, buy a monthly STAS pass (~15€/month). Buy at the start of the month — it resets on the 1st.
- Note: transport prices (tram, trains) and many student discounts do not apply after age 26, even with a student card.
- Tram inspectors are frequent and strict — always scan your card or validate your ticket every time you board. Fines are heavy. If you don't have a valid pass, pay with a credit/debit card (phone or physical) directly on the tram.
- The tram occasionally stops due to maintenance or public disturbances — if possible, choose accommodation close to campus.

Bank Account

Revolut (Recommended)

Most of the 2024–2026 cohort used Revolut. You only need a French phone number, passport, and visa. Everything is done in the app. You can receive scholarship payments, pay rent, and transfer money internationally. No complicated paperwork.

Other Options

- BNP Paribas — Recommended by students. Student-friendly accounts, but verify student status annually to keep fee exemptions. Note: Credit Agricole no longer opens accounts for students.
- Societe Generale Bellevue — Good welcome offers for under-26s.
- N26 — German online bank, no fees. Non-French IBAN means scholarships cannot be received directly. Note: some processes (e.g. rental deposit reimbursement) cannot be completed with N26 — a Revolut account works for these.
- Wise — Belgian IBAN but previous cohorts received scholarships successfully. Easy currency exchange, physical card available.

Open your bank account as soon as possible. The programme office waits until all students have accounts before processing scholarship payments. Notify your bank of any address or phone changes when you move. For students over 25, traditional banks may charge monthly fees — Revolut is a convenient alternative.

SIM Card

Buy a SIM card without a contract (sans engagement) — cancelling a contracted SIM at the end of the semester is complicated.

- Free Mobile — From ~13€/month, no commitment, EU roaming included. Store in city centre.
- SFR Prepaid — Highly recommended. ~10€ for the card, free data first month, no contract. Available at supermarkets, tabac shops, and train stations.
- Lebara — Good coverage, works across Europe.
- Lyca — Cheapest option but inconsistent service. Includes EU data for travel, though some users receive scam calls in French.

To keep your French number when switching providers, call 3179 for your RIO code and give it to the new provider.

Social Security Number

Register at etudiant-etranger.ameli.fr. You will need: birth certificate, passport and visa, bank account details, student certificate or student card, and VLS-TS visa validation. A temporary number arrives within a few weeks; permanent takes 1+ month.

French Health System

- Emergencies are covered by PSRS Health Insurance. Pay upfront and request reimbursement with a full medical report including diagnosis, treatment, and tests performed.
- For illness in Saint-Étienne, book via SOS Médecin (near Neoresid Bellevue).
- Bring a supply of any regular medications, your original prescription, and a doctor's note. French pharmacies require a French prescription.
- Without a healthcare card, pay upfront then send a reimbursement letter to CPAM de la Loire.
- Contact UJM's doctor for preventive healthcare (e.g. birth control).

CAF Housing Allowance

- CAF can cover up to 60% of your rent. All students in France can apply.
- Apply as soon as you receive your Social Security Number — payments start the month after you apply, so any delay means missed payments.
- Apply at caf.fr (French only — ask your residence manager for help). Payments are retroactive.
- More info in English: search for the 'ALE locatif' leaflet on caf.fr.

Get Involved:

A mentorship programme is currently being implemented at UJM, so take advantage of it. You will be paired with a professional working in industry or research, giving you direct access to career advice and real-world perspectives on photonics.

We also have a running team all levels welcome. It is a straightforward way to bond with other students both in your cohort and in others!

Once in France

Groceries

- Lidl and Intermarché offer budget-friendly shopping. Lidl has an in-store bakery for fresh bread and croissants. Download the Lidl Plus app for extra discounts.
- Pop Shop (UJM Tréfilerie campus, Tue & Thu only) — affordable stationery, household essentials (curtains, bedsheets, towels, cutlery), and personal care items.
- Bengali, Indian, or Pakistani groceries: Bongo Bazar and Family Market. There is also an Afghan shop near Bongo Bazar.
- For cheaper general groceries: FUOK Destock Tous, close to Campus Tréfilerie.
- Halal chicken at local butchers near Auchan Mall, and sometimes at Lidl.
- Agora programme in December: register through the university for essentials at up to 90% off.
- Les Restos du Cœur and Secours Populaire Loire offer free grocery support for self-funded students — schedules vary by season, confirm timelines directly with the organisations.

Restaurants

Many restaurants near the university area and around Hôtel de Ville offer student discounts. Always ask when dining out.

- Pause Boulange — Bakery very close to UJM campus. Student discount on meals and individual items.
- La Fabuleuse Cantine — On the UJM campus. Healthy plant-based meals with student discounts. Arrive before 12:00 — limited student meals per day.
- O Dragon — Buffet restaurant at 13 Rue Marc Charras, 42100 Saint-Étienne. Wide variety of Chinese and Asian dishes. Separate afternoon and evening services with a time limit per sitting.
- Chicken Point — Halal snacks. Very welcoming, sometimes offers extra/free snacks to students. Cheap.
- Royal Indian Restaurant — Good Indian food.

Mosques

The Muslim community in Saint-Étienne is large. There are many mosques throughout the city. The Grand Mosque is the biggest and is the nearest to Campus Manufacture.

Useful Apps — Saint-Étienne

- Moovizy — Official app for STAS transport (bus and tram schedules and route planning).
- La Boge (laboge.fr) — Platform for student events and free/discounted activity tickets: concerts, free STAS cards, ice skating, football matches, and more. Well worth keeping an eye on.
- Affluences — Check crowd levels and book study rooms in university libraries.
- Eduroam — Log in with your UJM credentials for free Wi-Fi at UJM and at other European institutions.
- Too Good To Go — Buy surplus food from grocery stores, bakeries, and restaurants at heavily discounted prices. Very popular with students.

Before Leaving for Finland

- Book your room inspection in advance — as soon as you have your flights.
- End your EDF contract: call EDF, confirm departure date, provide IBAN for any reimbursement.
- Inform CAF: update your address to Finland on the CAF website and send a brief letter in French to CAF de la Loire.
- Cancel your SIM contract if applicable: send a letter to ‘Service Résiliation’ via laposte.fr/lettre-simple-et-suivie-en-ligne.

Getting a Bike

- [Leboncoin.fr/c/velos](https://leboncoin.fr/c/velos) — large second-hand market
- La Souris Verte (lasourisverte.org) — local repair shop selling refurbished bikes
- Facebook Marketplace

Be careful with bikes if you are not used to cycling as a regular mode of transport — the city has tram tracks and it takes time to adjust. Financial support from Université Jean Monnet: €70 for bicycle purchase + €30 for safety equipment (vest, helmet, lights). Invoice must be in your name. See bienvenuealujm.univ-st-etienne.fr for details.

Getting a Computer

- [Leboncoin.fr/c/ordinateurs](https://leboncoin.fr/c/ordinateurs) — large second-hand market

Financial support from Université Jean Monnet: €200 to €350 towards buying a computer (amount depends on your situation - scholarship students and 2nd+ year international students). You must live independently. Invoice must be in your name. See <https://bienvenuealujm.univ-st-etienne.fr/fr/mes-aides/aides-numerique/aide-a-l-achat-d-un-ordinateur.html> for details

Note: The info above is for 2025–2026. Applications are now closed. Check the website around late summer each year for the next campaign

Traveling to Finland

Checklist

- Submit mobility notification (migri.fi)
- Get your DVV number
- Apply for housing via Joensuun Elli — apply as early as possible
- Buy winter gear before leaving Saint-Étienne
- Register with Student Health Service (FSHS)
- Get a SIM card

General Information

- A local UEF tutor will be assigned to help you settle in. They can collect your flat keys from the Elli office before your arrival if you wish.
- You can see the Northern Lights in Joensuu!
- There will be a lot of snow. It only starts getting above zero around April. Winters are dark — consider taking a Vitamin D supplement.
- Joensuu is very flat and cycling is common. Rent or buy a used bike.
- Most Finnish government websites are in English. Most people speak excellent English.
- Download the Tuudo app: digital student card, cafeteria menu, schedule, and university info in one place.
- A UEF semester is split into two periods (before and after Easter). Most courses span about 2 months. Plan your ECTS registration with this in mind — talk to senior students about which electives are worth taking.

Mobility Notification

As a French visa holder, you do not need a Finnish visa — only a mobility notification. Email a few documents and receive authorization within days.

More info: migri.fi/en/mobility-notification-to-finland

DVV Number

Present yourself to the Digital and Population Data Service Agency after arriving. The DVV number is your Finnish social security number and is required for banking, healthcare, and the UEF database. You may leave your appointment with the number the same day — much faster than France.

More info: dvv.fi/en/joensuu-en

Housing (Joensuun Elli)

- Apply as early as possible — applications are processed in order of submission.
- Elli places female and male students separately in shared apartments of 3 people. If you have close friends in the programme, mention this in your application to request placement together (or in pairs in the same flat or building) — this may be accommodated.
- Shared flats have 3 rooms. Most students are not placed in their first-choice building.
- Flats are comfortable but what you get is random. Kitchen utensils and furnishings depend on what previous tenants have left behind. If you bought household items in France, consider bringing them — Finland is significantly more expensive.

- No internet is included. Most students buy a Finnish SIM (DNA) with an unlimited data plan and use mobile hotspot. Consider buying a router.
- Karjamaentie 4 & 10: 25 min from city centre; bus 7 to UEF campus every hour.
- Apajakuja and Nolvakkantie: close to campus; buses 2, 4, 6, 12.
- Each residence has a free sauna — check the Elli website for your building's schedule.
- Pick up your keys at the Elli office in Joensuu city centre before accessing your flat.
- Kontii second-hand shops are great for cheap household items.

Luggage & Preparation

- Buy winter clothes before leaving France. Decathlon in Saint-Étienne or Lyon is affordable. Options also at Primark or Steel. In Joensuu, clothing is expensive and options are limited. Essentials: thermal layers, wool socks, good coat, gloves, and winter boots.
- Consider shipping luggage via Eurosender rather than checking it in. Use boxes of maximum 25 kg — anything above 25 kg is charged as an additional box. Check box size limits on their website as oversized boxes increase the price dramatically. Expect at least one day of delay beyond the estimated delivery date.
- Eurosender tip: sign up for an account and they will send a discount code to your email within a few days.
- Shipping tips: as soon as you have a Finnish phone number, update it on your shipment. Delivery drivers often do not call non-local numbers. Also provide the door access code for your building to the shipping company as soon as you arrive.

Student Health Service (FSHS)

Pay the Kela fee to access FSHS. Book appointments with a GP, physiotherapist, or dentist by phone. English service available.

- If your name cannot be found in the system, contact Noora (programme coordinator) or go to the FSHS office at UEF.
- Sending your DVV number to the registration office usually resolves access issues.

More info: yths.fi/en/frontpage/

Get a SIM card

- DNA prepaid SIM for Finland: available at DNA stores or R Kioski. The 20€/month unlimited data plan is the most popular choice.

Transportation

Local Buses

- Monthly pass (Region A) via the Waltti Mobiili app. Student Waltti card from Carelicum — 56€ first month (includes card), then 50€/month.
- Route planner: joensuu.digitransit.fi/?locale=en

Long-Distance

- Matkahuolto.fi — buses • Onnibus.com — cheap buses • VR.fi — trains
- Facebook carpooling: Kimppakyyti Joensuu • Helsinki-Joensuu-Helsinki • Kimppakyyti Kuopio-Joensuu • Kimppakyyti Jyväskylä-Joensuu

Bike Rental

- Kansalaistalo (Torikatu 30, Mon–Fri 8:00–14:30) — rent for up to a year. kansalaistalo.fi/en/bike-rental/

Local Culture & Information

- Carelicum Visitor Centre (Koskikatu 5) — Mon/Tue/Thu/Fri 10–16, Wed 10–18, Sat 10–16. Museum, tourist info, local bus cards, free internet.
- Visit Joensuu Tourist Info (Joensuu Market Hall) — Mon–Fri 12–17, Sat 11–16.
- Joensuu City Library (Koskikatu 25) — Mon–Fri 9–19, Sat 10–16. English books and magazines, free internet, printing.

Useful Apps — Joensuu

- Waltti Mobiili — Essential for bus schedules and tickets.
- Aurora / My Aurora Forecast — Track Northern Lights activity.
- Tuudo — Digital student card, cafeteria menu, and university information.

Second-Hand Shopping

SHOP	HOURS	ITEMS
Fida Secondhand(Teollisuuskatu 21)	Mon–Fri 10–18Sat 10–17	Clothes, small items, furniture, kitchenware
Easykirppis(Teollisuuskatu 4)	Mon–Fri 10–19Sat 10–16, Sun 12–16	Clothes, small items
Kiertamo(Jokikatu 18)	Mon–Thu 9–18Fri 9–16	Furniture, kitchenware
Huippukirppis(Sompatie 2A)	Mon–Fri 11–18Sat 10–15	Clothes, small items
Punaisen Ristin Kontti(Voimatie 10)	Mon–Fri 9–18Sat 10–17, Sun 11–17	Clothes, furniture, kitchenware
Ekokirppis(Siltakatu 18)	Mon–Fri 11–17Sat 11–15	Furniture, small items, clothes
Goodwill(Salpakatu 2)	Mon–Fri 10–18Sat 10–16	Clothes, furniture, kitchenware
Fleahouse(Avainkuja 3)	Mon–Fri 10:30–18Sat 10–15, Sun 12–15	Clothes

Online

- Tori.fi — Large platform for used items; search by Pohjois-Karjala/Joensuu. Finnish only.
- Facebook: Myy ja osta roska Joensuussa • Myydään/ostetaan Pohjois-Karjala • JoeKu Share
- Facebook Marketplace — especially good for bikes.

Supermarkets & General Stores

- Prisma, Citymarket — full supermarkets • Lidl — food & household • Tokmanni — general store • Rusta — hardware • Jysk — cheap pillows and duvets

Currency tip: Exchange euros before arriving in Joensuu (Helsinki airport or railway station). Ask for smaller notes (10€, 20€, 50€) — many cafés and small shops don't accept large bills.

UPEC — Paris

Accommodation

Ile-de-France's excellent public transport gives you a very large area to choose from. The UPEC semester is fully hybrid, so all courses are available online or in person.

- Options: CROUS housing, Studapart, Le Bon Coin (verify listings in person), other student platforms.

Cité Internationale Universitaire de Paris

- Located in the 14th arrondissement — a large campus of 47 nationality houses. Great for experiencing Paris without paying a fortune.
- Apply in spring or summer. You may be placed in any house regardless of nationality.
- Benefits: sports facilities, central library, CROUS dining, free language groups, international community.
- Travel time to UPEC: approximately 40 minutes.

Transportation

- UPEC has a direct metro stop on line 8.
- Imagine R pass (under-26 in Ile-de-France): 392.30€/year, payable monthly. Available from September/October. Covers bus, metro, RER, and regional trains including the airport.
- Other Navigo passes (monthly, weekly, single) available on the Navigo website and app.

Residence Permit Renewal

- Begin the renewal process in summer. Exact timing depends on your permit type.
- Expect a longer process than in Saint-Étienne due to higher demand in Paris.
- Only book a Préfecture de Police appointment after you receive the SMS confirming your titre is ready.
- Appointment slots fill up quickly — check the website frequently as new times are added regularly.

Making the Most of Paris

- No exams at UPEC — only projects and assignments. Take the opportunity to explore Paris and Ile-de-France.
- Under 26: free entry to many Paris museums with your titre de séjour.
- Over 26: first Sunday of each month, many museums offer free entry to all. Reserve through each museum's ticketing website.

Vilnius University — Lithuania

Accommodation

- Options: Student accommodation near campus or private accommodations.
- Student accommodations have shared rooms among three to four students, shared kitchen and washrooms (with almost 10 to 15 students). They are very cheap and nice, near the campus library which you can visit 24/7.
- In the case of private accommodation, you need to search well in advance. It's hard to get a private accommodation near the campus.

University Location

- Located in Saulėtekis Ave 9.
- Apply immediately! Begin your search for the house after applying for mobility.
- You may be placed in any student housing regardless of nationality.
- Benefits: central library, free language groups, international community.
- Travel time to Nanotech building: approximately 10 minutes by walk.

Transportation

- VU has a direct bus station, it has several stops near different buildings of the campus.
- The bus ticket is very cheap, students have an 80 percent discount on the bus ticket. You will pay only 8 euros for the bus each month, you can also buy a 3 month ticket for just 24 euros.
- To access the student discount, you will need a Lithuanian sim card number, and your student card (called Isac card). For the first month the university will give you a certificate to get the discount.
- You can buy a ticket from the trafi app, it's very easy to use.

Making the Most of Vilnius

- Exams at VU — Only projects, presentations and a few exams. Take the opportunity to explore the beauty of Vilnius.
- Explore the UNESCO Old Town, visit the artistic Republic of Užupis, hike to Gediminas Tower, sample local cuisine, and enjoy vibrant nightlife organized by ESN groups.

Residence Permit Renewal

- Begin the renewal process in summer. Exact timing depends on your permit type.
- Expect a longer process than in Saint-Étienne due to higher demand in Paris.
- Only book a Préfecture de Police appointment after you receive the SMS confirming your titre is ready.
- Appointment slots fill up quickly — check the website frequently as new times are added regularly.

General Advice

- Read your Student Agreement carefully. Know your obligations as a scholarship holder and what the administration owes you in return — including a designated monthly tutor at each university.
 - Be proactive about getting to know each institution and city. Moving frequently leaves little time to figure things out organically.
 - Too Good To Go app — buy food from grocery stores, bakeries, and restaurants at heavy discounts. Many students find it invaluable for saving money.
 - Internships: don't hesitate to contact researchers whose work interests you. Some students secured summer internships by reaching out after Industrial and Research Days. Start early.
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We're Here to Help

Starting a new academic programme across multiple countries and cultures is no small thing. Don't hesitate to reach out to your cohort, to senior students, or to programme coordinators whenever you need support. We're all in this together.