Arrival and settling in
Registering with the authorities

Non-EU/EEA citizens must have a valid passport and will need to check at a local Finnish embassy or consulate whether a visa or a residence permit for Finland is required. The residence permits in Finland are issued by the Finnish Immigration Service (Migri).

You can apply for a study-based continuous residence permit (type A) for the entire duration of your studies. However, the residence permit can be granted only for the time during which your passport is valid.

The application process takes time, so please apply for the residence permit immediately, and start making the arrangements for the compulsory visit to a Finnish mission (embassy or consulate). You should reserve at least two months, preferably more, for the application process. You need to have a valid residence permit before arriving in Finland and starting your studies.

The residence permit process starts with an online application, includes a personal visit to a Finnish mission to prove your identity and give your biometrics, and ends when you receive your residence permit card. Bear in mind that there might not be a Finnish mission in the country of your legal residence, thus you might have to visit another country. As some Finnish missions are very busy during the high season of applications, it is important that you book an appointment as early as possible and arrange a visa for the visit, if necessary. The processing time of the permit application is counted from the visit to a Finnish mission and not from the date of submission of the application.

- Read carefully the customer instructions provided by Migri and visit the Migri website for students to familiarise yourself with the application process and the application requirements.
- A common reason for delays in the residence permit application process is insufficient health insurance cover. Please read carefully the insurance instructions by Migri.
- Another common reason for rejecting a residence permit application is the lack of funding. You need to prove funding for the first year of studies at the time of the application, but are required to have sufficient funding for the whole duration of the residence permit you are applying for. Migri can monitor throughout your studies that the funding requirements are met. Please read carefully the instructions by Migri regarding the proof of funds.
- Migri processes all student applications as urgent and the university cannot influence the application process.
- Note that from the date of the decision, the delivery of the residence permit card takes approximately two weeks, and you should wait for it in the same country in which you submitted your application.
- If you are granted a residence permit (type A), you will also receive a municipality of residence. More information on municipality on Digital and Population Data Services’ pages.
- Note that the coronavirus pandemic may affect the residence permit application process. Please see Migri’s pages for effects of the coronavirus on their services.

When you are granted a residence permit, your personal information will automatically be recorded in the Finnish Population Information System, and you will be issued a Finnish personal identity code. Due to some local residence permit processes (concerning at least the citizens of India and Pakistan), your information might not be registered in the Population Information System, or you might not get the Finnish personal identity code when you are issued your residence permit. In this case, you need to apply for the registration and the Finnish personal identity code at the Digital and Population Data Services Agency after you have arrived in Finland, see ‘apply for a municipality of residence’ below.

EU/EEA citizens

You don't need a residence permit, but upon arrival in Finland, you must apply for registration of EU citizen’s right of residence if your stay lasts for longer than three months. The application for the registration must be submitted within three months of the day of your arrival.

Application can be submitted online, but the registration process requires a personal visit at the Finnish Immigration Service’s (Migri) service point. It is advisable to book an appointment for registration beforehand (already during summer), as waiting times can be long and in September there may not be time slots available anymore.

When your right of residence is registered, your personal information will be recorded in the Finnish Population Information System and you will receive a Finnish personal identity code.

You also have to register your address at the Digital and Population Data Services Agency after you have arrived in Finland, see ‘apply for a municipality of residence’ below.

Citizens of the Nordic countries

You don't need a residence permit, but upon arrival in Finland, you must register your personal data in the Finnish Population Information system at the Digital and Population Data Services Agency. In connection with the registration, you will receive a Finnish personal identity code. More detailed information about the registration process on Digital and Population Data Services Agency’s (DVV) pages.

Please note that you must personally visit DVV for the registration. You can book an appointment beforehand (already during summer), as waiting times can be long in autumn.

If you are staying in Finland for more than a year (regardless of your nationality), you are required to register your place of residence and your permanent municipality of residence in Finland at the Digital and Population Data Services Agency (DVV). For the DVV registration you will need a permanent address in Finland.

It is important to apply for the municipality, as the registration enables you, for example, to receive the full student discount in public transportation (HSL) and to use the municipal health care services.

Once you have your address in Finland, fill in the application form and book an appointment (choose international registrations as a service) to visit the DVV office of your municipality, e.g. Espoo or Helsinki. Instructions and the application form are available on DVV’s website.
If you have not received your Finnish personal identity code with your residence permit or when registering as EU citizen in Finland, you will be registered in the Finnish Population Information System and get the personal identity code at the same time when you are granted the municipality of residence.

Exchange or international joint master’s students (staying in Finland for less than 1 year) are not necessarily required to register the municipality of residence since they have not moved to Finland on permanent basis and thus are not usually granted a permanent home municipality in Finland. If there is a need for a Finnish personal identity code (e.g. for taxation) and the code has not been issued before (with residence permit or EU citizen’s registration by Migri), it can be applied for at DVV.

The Finnish personal identity code (i.e. social security number, ‘henkilötunnus’ in Finnish) is a means of identification in Finland. The personal identity code consists of 11 characters, including your birthdate (DDMMYY) and five additional digits, and is always unique. You can check your personal identity code from e.g. your residence permit or the notification of registration that you receive from DVV.

It is strongly recommended that you get the personal identity code, as it will make your life in Finland easier. It is needed for accessing important services, such as the FSHS (healthcare services) and the HSL transportation seasonal tickets, or when opening a bank account or a mobile phone plan. The personal identity code is also required for taxation and municipal services, and if you get any salary or scholarship from Finland, it is required to enable payments.

How to get the personal identity code:

- Non-EU/EEA citizens: when you are granted the student residence permit OR upon arrival by registering at the Digital and Population Data Services Agency
- EU/EEA citizens: when your right of residence is registered at Migri OR upon arrival by registering at the Digital and Population Data Services Agency
- Nordic citizens: when you register at the Digital and Population Data Services Agency

Note that the identity code is sensitive personal information, so please do not share it in social media or other open channels.

After you have received your Finnish personal identity code and registered your Finnish address, remember to update them also in the student register.

To update the personal identity code, visit the student services or send them an encrypted message from your Aalto email to studentservices@aalto.fi. If you visit the student services in person, remember to take your identity card and the new Finnish identity code with you.

You can update your Finnish address in Sisu yourself. Instructions for updating your personal details in Sisu Help.

Before arrival

University does not provide health insurance for international students. As FSHS (Finnish Student Health Services) only provides basic health care services (and does not perform medial operations or have emergency services) please make sure that you have a valid health insurance. The costs of treatment at a hospital may rise to several hundreds or thousands of euros if you need hospital care or laboratory tests. The university is not responsible for any payments or arrangements.

Citizens of non-EU/EEA countries are required to have valid health insurance already at the time when applying for the residence permit for Finland. This is a compulsory requirement for obtaining residence permit for studies lasting more than three months. The same requirement applies for both degree-seeking and exchange/free-mover students. You can search the requirements and possible options for a private health insurance from Migri’s website. You can find the insurance requirements explained in Migri’s Webinar about studying in Finland (start at 13:11). If you consider other options, make sure that the insurance fulfills the necessary requirements.

Citizens of EU/EEA-countries are entitled to medical care while staying temporarily in another EU/EEA-country. The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) serves as a proof of the entitlement. By presenting the card you can use the services of the municipal health care centres, and in case of emergency, you are entitled to the same benefits with the same costs as local residents. You should make sure you have the EHIC card with you when arriving in Finland.

It is strongly recommended that you have also a private insurance as an additional security. Please note that the individual systems of the EU countries and practices surrounding the use of the EHIC card may vary.

Degree students and international joint master’s students: see information about accommodation under housing.

Exchange students: see information about accommodation and housing for exchange students.

EU-citizens: European Health Insurance Card, letter of acceptance from Aalto, proof of financial means to support your studies (for example Certificate of your Erasmus grant), few passport-sized photographs, prescriptions if you are on medication and some euros (cash).

Non-EU Citizens: Proof of health insurance, letter of acceptance from Aalto, proof of financial means to support your studies, few passport-sized photographs, prescriptions if you are on medication and some euros (cash).

- Travelling with a taxi from the airport may cost up to 60 euros (please check the exact fare from the driver before the trip).
- Staying in a hotel even for a few days may cost you a month’s rent as the capital region is often very busy in the autumn and most places are fully booked.
- Depending on your housing arrangements you may need to spend money on furniture, transport, bedding, cutlery and so on, so please ensure you check from your housing provider beforehand what is included and budget realistically for the missing things.
- Please check the Financial Matters page for estimates of how to plan your budget.
• Please ensure you have a place to stay before arriving in Finland, as the university does not have any emergency housing or guest rooms or 24-hour reception. Hotels are expensive and may be fully booked at the time, and finding a more permanent place to stay may take a while.
• Find out how, where and when to get the keys to your accommodation and who to contact, as most housing offices close early (around 4.00 pm on weekdays) and are unlikely to be open at weekends.
• Please check the details of your housing carefully before arrival, as student housing may not have furniture, electricity, bedding or cutlery when you arrive, and it may take a while to get these things arranged (and this may also affect your budget).
• Each school has its own student tutor or tutors, who help out the new students in practical matters related to arrival and student life. Tutors familiarize new students with studies and welcome them into the academic community at Aalto. Student associations and student guilds will be introduced also.

Settling in

From the airport to the Helsinki city centre

Helsinki-Vantaa Airport is located in Vantaa. It is easy and safe to use trains, buses or taxi to arrive from the airport to Helsinki city centre.

Offices of main student housing providers:

• HOAS' main office is located in the centre of Helsinki (street address Pohjoinen Rautatienkatu 29), a walking distance from the central railway station and Kamppi metro station and main bus terminal
• AYY main office (including housing office) is located at the campus in Otaniemi, Espoo (street address: Otakaari 11)

From Helsinki city centre to Aalto University

The campus is located in Otaniemi, Espoo. You can take the metro from the Central Railway Station or from Kamppi metro station to the campus. You can board a metro towards Tapiola or Matinkylä, they both stop at Aalto University. Get off at the Aalto University station. Please use Helsinki Region Transport (HSL) journey planner to check the connections, timetables and tickets.

Tickets can be purchased from ticket vending machines at the Central Railway Station and Kamppi metro station. Mobile tickets are also available.

Note! When traveling on the metro, you must have the ticket before you enter the metro platform area after having passed the Travel Card readers. For example, if you use a mobile ticket, make sure you have received the ticket before entering the platform area.

How to travel in the Helsinki region

The public transportation system in the Helsinki region is reliable and efficient. For almost any part of the region there is a public transport connection either by bus, local train, tram or metro or by a combination of these.

In order to find the correct route in Helsinki region, please use Helsinki Region Transport (HSL) journey planner. Please type your from and to addresses as well as the time of departure or arrival into the journey planner and the service will search the best connections for your journey.

For single tickets you can upload an app, use ticket machines or sales point (see HSL website). Student discount for public transportation can be activated later (see below).

• Your school-specific orientation materials guide you when to arrive at the campus, where to go and what time.
• To navigate on campus
  • A printable map of Otaniemi campus is available here.
  • Download Aalto Space -campus app.
• If upon arrival you are not sure where to go, you can start by visiting the Starting Point or a student service desk to find out where to go on the campus (please check the opening times before your visit).
• Where to eat - restaurants and cafeterias on campus

Degree students:

Once you have registered your municipality of residence, you can get the HSL travel card with student discount. See instructions

Exchange students and international joint master's students:

You can get for the HSL travel card with a student discount after your arrival. See instructions.

Degree students

Not required (your address will be registered when applying for the municipality of residence).

Exchange students and international joint master's students

You should make a notification of move within one week of your arrival in Finland. This can be done by filling out a form available at the Digital and Population Data Services Agency (DVV) or at post office (Posti). If you register your municipality of residence at DVV, it is easiest to fill out the notification of move at the same time.

All students

Remember to make a notification of move if you later on move inside Finland and also when you leave Finland.
Please remember to update any changes in your contact information also to the university’s database. You can do this online in the student register system Sisu (Until 31.7.2021 Weboodi).

Read information about opening a bank account under Financial matters.

Get a library card for the university library from the Aalto learning centre.

General facilities in buildings are publicly accessible, some areas require an access card. For students the access is linked to the HSL travel card (see below). Instructions for activating access with HSL card.