

WELCOME !

Dear Student,

You have chosen the University of Florence to complete a part of your studies.

Congratulations, thank you and welcome.

This guidebook should help in your first contacts with Italy and the city of Florence. It includes practical information which should provide answer to the most frequent questions (life in Florence, administrative steps, didactic organisation). We hope it will make it easier for you to find your place among Florence students.

During your stay in Florence, our team will always be available to help making your visit and stay successful and pleasant, both from an academic and a personal point of view.

We look forward to meeting you!

**The Erasmus Staff of the School of Mathematical, Physical and
Natural Sciences (SMFN)**

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1. Surroundings

Tuscany and Florence

Tuscany is a region in central Italy with an area of about 23,000 square kilometers (8,900 sq miles) and a population of about 3.8 million inhabitants. The regional capital is Florence. Seven Tuscan localities have been designated World Heritage Sites: the historic centre of Florence, the historical centre of Siena, the square of the Cathedral of Pisa, the historical centre of San Gimignano, the historical centre of Pienza, the Val d'Orcia and Medici Villas and Gardens. Tuscany has over 120 protected natural reserves, making Tuscany and its capital Florence a popular tourist destination that attracts millions of people every year.

The Metropolitan Florence has a population of around one million inhabitants. It is a city which bustles with industry, craft, commerce, culture, art and science.

Founded by the Romans in the first century B.C., Florence began its rebirth after the decadence of the barbaric ages in the Carolingian period and reached its highest pinnacles of civilization between the 11th and 15th centuries as a free city, balancing the authority of the Emperors with that of the Popes. In the 15th century it came under the rule of the Medici family who later became the Grand Dukes of Tuscany. This was the period when the city was at the height of its glory in art and culture, in politics and economic power. The Grand Duchy of the Medici was followed in the 18th century by that of the House of Lorraine. In 1860 Tuscany became part of the Kingdom of Italy of which Florence was the capital from 1865 to 1871. The city had once more taken up its role as an important centre for culture and arts.

Florence contains an exceptional artistic heritage, glorious testimony of its secular civilization. Cimabue and Giotto the fathers of Italian painting lived here, along with Arnolfo and Andrea Pisano, reformists of architecture and sculpture; Brunelleschi, Donatello and Masaccio, founders of the Renaissance; Ghiberti and Della Robbia Family; Filippo Lippi and Beato Angelico; Botticelli and Paolo Uccello; the universal geniuses Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. Their works, along with those of many generations of artists up to the masters of the present century, are gathered in the city's many museums. In Florence, thanks to Dante, the Italian language was born; with Petrarca and Boccaccio literary studies were affirmed; with Humanism the philosophy and values of classical civilization were revived; with Machiavelli modern political science was born; with Guicciardini, historical prose; and with Galileo, modern experimental science.

Florence is called the capital of arts. According to statistics produced by UNESCO, 60% of the world's most important works of art are located in Italy and approximately half of these are in Florence.

During the Italian Renaissance Florence acquired its renaissance palaces and squares, turning into a living museum. Many squares, such as Piazza della Signoria, exhibit famous statues and fountains. Florence is also a city of incomparable indoor pleasures. Its chapels, galleries and museums are inexhaustible treasures, capturing the complex, often elusive spirit of the Renaissance more fully than any other place in the country. The most famous museum in Florence is the Uffizi which houses works by Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Titian and Rubens. Other great art museums include the Pitti Palace, Galleria dell'Accademia and Palazzo Vecchio. Florence is also home to some of the biggest churches in Italy, including the famous Duomo of Florence, San Lorenzo, Santa Maria Novella and Santa Croce.

The economy of Florence is based mainly on the services sector, as the city is an important commercial centre. The traditional centuries-old banking and financial sector continues to flourish. Tourism and crafts (jewelry, embroidery, footwear, leatherwork, ceramics, wrought-iron and basket work, lace and reproduction furniture) provide considerable sources of income. The city is an active centre of culture, and organizes periodical exhibitions and art festivals. Industry, though consisting generally of small and medium-sized firms, has fairly important precision engineering, optical, pharmaceutical, chemical, metallurgical, publishing and textile sectors.

Up from the time of Charlemagne, Florence is an university town. Academies, art schools, scientific institutes and cultural centers all contribute to the city's intense activity.

Position and Climate

Being on the main national railway lines Florence is easily accessible from most important places both in Italy and abroad. The Florence Vespucci airport, where both national and international airlines stop, is located 5 km from the city centre. Pisa airport is located approximately 90 km from Florence. The main motorway, A1, connects Florence with Bologna and Milano in the North and with Rome and Naples in the South. The motorway A11 to the sea joins Florence to Prato, Pistoia, Montecatini Terme, Lucca, Pisa and to all the resorts on the Tyrrhenian sea. There is also a motorway which connects Florence to Siena.

The climate is temperate but rather variable, with breezy winters and hot summers.

Public transport

The easiest way of travelling in Florence is by bus or tramway through the ATAF (local bus company) service. Students under 27 may purchase an ATAF monthly ticket for a reduced price. To buy monthly tickets is necessary to get an ATAF card that can be obtained from the ATAF's Office - ATAF point (at the central railway station of Santa Maria Novella) and from other locations listed in ATAF website upon filling the application form. You will also need one passport photograph and a document proving your registration to the University of Florence. Bus tickets can be bought from bars, tobacconist, newsagents showing the sign *biglietti ATAF*, from automatic distributing machines, by text dialing ATAF free number for mobile phones and on the bus.

For further information please visit: www.ataf.net.

Taxis are quite expensive in Florence. In case of need dial 0554242 or 0554390.

Health care and insurance

Students from a EEA country (EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Swiss) are insured through their own national health service. Before leaving their home country they should bring their Health Insurance European Card or ask for it if they don't have it yet. The following link is useful for any kind of matter concerning mobility in Europe.

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/home.jsp?langId=it>

Students that are not from an EEA country (European Economic Area) or don't have a complete health coverage should take into account the subscription of a health insurance fund at their choice. In case students need to see a doctor in Italy, they must join the Italian National Health Service and a doctor will be automatically assigned to them. In case of previous pathologies or special needs we highly recommend the subscription of a private insurance. Students can get information at any ASL (Local Health Authority) *Presidio* (office).

Residence permit

E.U. students, students from Switzerland, EEA and students from Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein are no longer required to obtain a residence permit. If the duration of their stay is less than three months no formalities are required. For longer periods it is necessary to apply for a permit from the Register Office of the Municipality where the student lives.

Non - EU students must apply for the residence permit within 8 days of arrival.

For further information on residence permit procedures, documents, and taxes please contact:

Portale Immigrazione

- Call Center 800 309 309 (for general information) 24 hours a day
- Toll Free number 803 160 (information on certified Post Offices), Mon. to Sat. 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
- www.portaleimmigrazione.it

Sportello Immigrazione

http://politichesocioabitative.comune.fi.it/stranieri/servizi/sportelli_immigrazione.html

Sede: Via Baracca 150/p - Firenze

Help Desk: 055 / 2767078

Fax: 055 / 2767052

e-mail: immigr@comune.fi.it

Skype: [immigr.comunefirenze](https://www.skype.com/name/immigr.comunefirenze)

Useful links:

Poste Italiane (Italian Postal Center) www.posteitaliane.it

Ministero dell'Interno (Ministry of Interior) www.interno.it

Polizia di Stato (State Police) www.poliziadistato.it

Associazione Nazionale Comuni Italiani (Association of Italian City Halls) www.anci.it

Immigrazione oggi (immigration today) www.immigrazioneoggi.it

Italian public holidays

Month	Date
January	1 st /6 th
	Easter Monday
April	25 th
May	1 st
June	2 nd /24 th
August	15 th
November	1 st
December	8 th /25 th /26 th

2. The University

Our history

The University of Florence can trace its origins to the *Studium Generale*, which was established in 1321 by the Florentine Republic. In 1472 the *Studium* was moved to Pisa. In 1859, the University re-emerged as *Istituto Superiore di Studi Pratici e di Perfezionamento* (Higher Institute of Vocational and Advanced Studies). In 1924 it was established as a public university (Royal Decree No. 2102/1923) and started its activities as a fully-fledged university.

The University of Florence is one of the largest institutions for research and higher education in Italy, with over 1900 tenured teaching staff and researchers, over 1600 permanent technical/administrative staff and language assistants and over 55 thousand students enrolled.

The University consists of 10 Schools: Agriculture, Architecture, Economics, Education and Humanities, Engineering, Law, Human Health Sciences, Mathematical, Physical and Natural Sciences, Political Sciences and Psychology. Scientific research is carried out in the 24 Departments of the University, grouped into 5 major areas: Social Sciences Area, Humanities and Education Area, Scientific Area, Technological Area and Biomedical Area.

A large part of the annual budget is allocated to scientific research. In the recent past the University of Florence has been ranked top among Italian Universities in the distribution of national research funds.

High-level research avails itself of the *centres of excellence*, which attract funding and form synergies with other institutions. The University of Florence is one of the largest and most productive public research systems in Italy. This result is related to the number of permanent and temporary researchers working in a wide range of disciplines and scientific fields and to the numerous junior scientists in training. It is also due to intensive participation in research programs of national and international importance, the significant scientific results achieved and the flow of funds which support research and knowledge transfer. This combination of factors qualifies the Florentine institution as a modern research university and accounts for its excellent ranking in national and international classifications.

The researchers from the various departments of the University of Florence have at their disposal several research structures

comprising inter-departmental and inter-university centres as well as some specialized research units and laboratories.

In recent years the University of Florence has increasingly consolidated its activities in the sphere of knowledge transfer: from the filing of patents to the setting-up of joint workshops with firms through to participation in spin-off companies.

The institutional role of the School of Mathematical, Physical and Natural Sciences is to coordinate educational activities that require the necessary scientific and technological knowledge in order to spread a solid education based on scientific rigorous and systematic method to lead the research in various fields and disciplines, basing on the development of models and on the resulting experimental verification. In particular, the disciplines that characterize the School of Mathematical, Physical and Natural Sciences traditionally turn much of their attention to the so-called *basic science*, whose purpose is to expand human knowledge through the understanding at every level of the world in which we live. Being a steady driver of new technologies, *basic science* is a strategic asset for the cultural growth of society as well as for the economic development.

The School of Mathematical, Physical and Natural Sciences (SMFN)

The School of Mathematical, Physical and Natural Sciences of the University of Florence coordinates educational courses characterized by cutting-edge scientific studies with particular attention to the labor market, respecting the traditions of research and diligent study open to the comparison with the European and international scientific community.

The School of Mathematical, Physical and Natural Sciences offers: nine Bachelor Degrees and nine Master Degrees:

Bachelor Degrees - 3 years - 180 credits	Master Degrees - further 2 years - 120 credits
Biological Sciences	Biology
Chemistry	Chemical Sciences
Physics and Astrophysics	Physical Sciences and Astrophysics
Optics and Optometry (lessons held in the village of Vinci)	Molecular Biotechnology
Computer Science	Computer Science
Natural Sciences	Nature and Human Sciences
Geological Sciences	Geological Sciences and Technologies
Mathematics	Mathematics
Diagnosis and materials for the conservation and restoration	Life Sciences and Materials for the conservation and restoration

All courses of study are in agreement with the patterns of the Ministerial Decree 270/04, and were subsequently brought into conformity with the Ministerial Decree 17/10 which redefines the requirements of the courses.

The sites

The teaching activities offered by the School of Mathematical, Physical and Natural Sciences (SMFN) are provided in several different locations.

The main site is the Polo Scientifico e Tecnologico in Sesto Fiorentino. Other classes are held in the centre of the city *Centro Storico* (Via del Proconsolo, Via La Pira, Via Romana), in the area of Careggi, in Empoli and in Vinci.

Academic calendar

The University of Florence bases its academic calendar on an *academic year* divided in two semesters.

First Semester: the classes of the first period usually start in September (around the half of the month) and they finish at the end of December.

Second Semester: the classes of the second period usually start in March and end in May.

Please take note that the academic calendar changes every year: all details are normally made available around the month of August on the university web site.

Classes

Classes usually take place in different buildings, depending on the degree course the student belong to. More info are available at <http://www.scienze.unifi.it/ls-6-corsi-di-studio.html>

Student workload and exams

The measure of students' workload is the CFU (University teaching credit, equivalent to ECTS). Each CFU equals to about 25 hours of student work, including lessons (or traineeship) and individual study. 1 CFU equals 8 hours frontal lessons and 12 hours practical tutorials.

Exams are scheduled at the end of each course. There are three ordinary exams sessions, each one with two calls: winter (January-February), summer (June-July), fall (September). An extraordinary exams session is held in April. The schedule of exam sessions is determined on a semester basis.

Students can register for examinations between 14 and 3 days

before the scheduled date of the examination.

Marking system

The Italian marking system is based on a scale from 18 to 30. From 18/30 to 30/30 cum laude is passed (*Superato*). Under 18/30 is failed (*Respinto*). Negative grades (under 18/30) are not recorded. Students needing the transcription in the transcript of records of a failed exam should ask to the teacher to validate it as *Respinto* in the online system.

Italian language courses

The Centro Linguistico di Ateneo (University Language Centre) offers Italian language classes for Erasmus students who have at least a basic knowledge of Italian. Incoming students are therefore strongly recommended to learn a basic Italian before arriving in Florence. At the moment courses and exams are all held in Italian.

For information about the scheduling of Italian language courses please contact the Centro Linguistico di Ateneo (web page <http://www.cla.unifi.it/>). The first course is free (<http://www.cla.unifi.it/CMpro-v-p-282.html>).

Internet

Students need an ID number and a password to access to the free wifi on line services of the University. They will be available at your arrival in Florence once the registration procedure has been completed.

Board and lodging

Unfortunately we cannot arrange accomodation for students. Students have to look for a room or apartment on their own through the usual search channels (websites for home search, local papers, notices on boards at the university, etc.).

Some opportunities of accommodation can be offered contacting in duly advance the following e-mail: welcomeservice@unifi.it.

A list of accommodation structures offering discount to visitors of the University of Florence is available at this link: http://www.unifi.it/upload/sub/relazioni_internazionali/accommodation_florence.pdf

For general information about students' accommodation please contact: DSU Toscana - Servizio sviluppo programmi abitativi, Viale Gramsci 36 - 50132 Firenze - 055 2261314. email: casa.fi@dsu.toscana.it. DSU Toscana provides free information and guidance to students for finding accommodation in Florence and its

suburbs. It also provides information on rental contracts.

All students have to notify the Erasmus Office of their address in Florence and of any subsequent change of residence that may occur. The updating of this information is of great importance since it allows us to establish any necessary contact.

University Canteens (Mensa universitaria)

All Erasmus students may use canteens facilities provided by DSU Toscana. In Florence there are several canteens near the main University buildings, these canteens offer lunch and dinner at a fixed cheap price. In order to use these facilities, students have to apply to DSU Toscana for a Canteen Card by showing their passport or identity card and the University enrolment certificate.

For information: <http://www.dsu.toscana.it/servizi/ristorazione/>

Library services

The University offers a large-scale library service with the main online scientific journals, access to computers and reading rooms. The *Biblioteca di Scienze* aim is to guarantee all the students the availability of the necessary information and documentation for the development of study, teaching and research. To get access to the university library you should first complete your registration as Erasmus exchange student and get your student ID number. More info concerning The *Biblioteca di Scienze* are available at: <http://www.sba.unifi.it/CMpro-l-s-13.html>

Sports

In its facilities the University Sports Center (CUS Firenze) organises a full range of courses with qualified instructors, open to all students, including Fitness and Body Building, GAG, Bosu, Aerobics, Karate, Yoga, Capoeira, Caribbean Dance, Archery and Tennis. It is also possible to attend swimming courses organized by associated sports centres. Students can hire facilities such as 5-a-side and 7-a-side soccer pitches and tennis courts at special terms. Moreover students can take part in interfaculty tournaments, promotional and leisure activities, winter and summer camps and competitions.

To register with the CUS you need:

- Two passport photographs;
- Student card proving enrolment at the University of Florence
- Payment of the registration fees (the cost is determined yearly)
- For more info: www.cus.firenze.it

Musical activities

The University of Florence has its own Orchestra and Choir.

Students that are willing to join them can take a look at the following link:

- Choir: www.corounifi.it
- Orchestra: spettacolo@unifi.it, orchestraunifi@gmail.com.

3. Erasmus+ Program

International Relations Office

The International Relations Office will be the main contact for administrative issues before student arrival and during the Erasmus mobility period. The office will be the link between the student and the Delegate of International Affairs and Erasmus Program of the School of Mathematical, Physical and Natural Sciences, Prof. Anna Maria Papini (email address: annamaria.papini@unifi.it).

The International Relations Office is located in Plesso Didattico, Viale Morgagni 40-44 Firenze III floor:

- Outgoing students

relint@scienze.unifi.it - Phone +39 055 2751349

- Incoming students

incoming@scienze.unifi.it - Phone +39 055 2751341.

The office is open from Mondays to Fridays h.9.00 - 13.00.

Erasmus Delegates

DEGREE COURSE	COORDINATOR	E-MAIL
LT Chimica; LM Scienze Chimiche	Anna Maria Papini	annamaria.papini@unifi.it
LT Fisica e Astrofisica; LM Scienze Fisiche e Astrofisiche; LT Ottica e Optometria	Franco Bagnoli	franco.bagnoli@unifi.it
LT Informatica; LM Informatica	Antonio Bernini	antonio.bernini@unifi.it
LT Matematica; LM Matematica	Angiolo Farina	angiolo.farina@unifi.it
LT Scienze Biologiche; LM Biologia	Luigia Pazzagli	luigia.pazzagli@unifi.it
LT Scienze Geologiche; LM Scienze e Tecnologie Geologiche	Simonetta Monechi	simonetta.monechi@unifi.it
LT Scienze Naturali; LM Scienze della	Martina Lari	martina.lari@unifi.it

Natura e dell'Uomo		
LT Diagnostica e Materiali per la conservazione e il restauro; LM Scienze e Materiali per la conservazione e il restauro	Rodorigo Giorgi	rodorigo.giorgi@unifi.it
LM Biotecnologie molecolari	Elisabetta Meacci	elisabetta.meacci@unifi.it

*LT: Bachelor degree; LM: Master degree.

How to get admitted - Erasmus+ Study and Traineeship in the School of Mathematical, Physical and Natural Sciences (SMFN)

Each student who is interested in coming to the School of Mathematical, Physical and Natural Sciences (SMFN) should follow our procedures and respect our deadlines. The student selected for an Erasmus mobility period in our university should be nominated by her/his home university. The International Relations Office needs to receive by e-mail the name, contact details and degree course of each nominated Erasmus student.

Erasmus Mobility for Study

1- Nomination and application

Deadlines

- I semester: June 30th
- II semester: November 30th.

Before the above mentioned deadlines the Erasmus student (or his/her home University) must send his/her application to the International Relations Office of the School of Mathematical, Physical and Natural Sciences (SMFN) filling any part including courses codes of the specific form of the European Community. The Transcript of Records with grades must be annexed to the enrollment form. The final time schedule of all the courses will be available not before September 1ST of each academic year. Therefore the Learning Agreement (LA) must be finalized before the arrival. In case of proven needs (overlapping classes etc.) the LA can be changed within the first month of the semester.

2- Confirmation of acceptance

Within one month after the nomination and application the Erasmus student and the sending Institution will receive the nomination and admission with his/her LA.

Be aware of the following steps:

Before starting classes all Erasmus students must visit: 1) the International Relationship Office of the School of Mathematical, Physical and Natural Sciences (SMFN) to complete the enrolment procedure and collect the student card (*Libretto*); 2) the Erasmus Delegate of her/his specific course to collect information about courses and didactic issues.

3- At the end of the stay and before leaving Florence

At the end of the mobility period students must go to the International Relations Office of the School of Mathematical, Physical and Natural Sciences (SMFN) to leave the student card. The transcript of records will be sent when ready to the home institution by e-mail. Original documents will be sent by ordinary mail to the home institution upon request.

Be aware that a B1 level of Italian and English language knowledge is required to follow the classes that will be held in Italian.

Erasmus Mobility for Traineeship

If a student is interested in coming to our university as an Erasmus Traineeship Student she/he must be selected by her/his home institution. The program aim is to satisfy the necessity of those who need specific training or research experience.

1- Nomination, application and confirmation of acceptance

The student must send:

- Learning Agreement for Traineeship and Letter of Intent signed by the Tutors of the Erasmus Student and by the Director of the Department and the Delegate of International Affairs and Erasmus Program of the hosting and sending Institution;
- a detailed CV including Transcript of Records with grades and two letters of recommendation.

The Tutor in the hosting Institution will be responsible to introduce the Erasmus student into the Department procedures required to attend his/her laboratory.

At the beginning of the traineeship the Erasmus student arriving at the University of Florence must go to:

- 1) the International Relations Office of the School of Mathematical, Physical and Natural Sciences (SMFN) with the original documents already signed by the sending Institution to complete the enrolment procedure and collect the student card (*Libretto*).
- 2) the Tutor and Department Director with the original documents already signed by the sending Institution and the student card

received by the School of Mathematical, Physical and Natural Sciences (SMFN).

2- At the end of the stay and before leaving Florence

At the end of the traineeship the Erasmus student must go to the International Relations Office to leave a copy of the transcript of work delivered from the Tutor and the student card.

Extending the mobility

Erasmus students and Erasmus trainers attending the University of Florence may ask for an extension that should not exceed the date of September 30th. The request must be submitted within one month before the end of the original accorded period. The request consisting of a mail from the student and a mail from the home institution containing the new date of departure and the reason for the extension, must be addressed to the International Relations Office.

Erasmus Day

The School of Mathematical, Physical and Natural Sciences (SMFN) organises some social events for Erasmus students. The aim of these events is to inform students about class organisation, exam procedures, cultural events and any other information which may help enhance the student's experience in Florence. Students are strongly required to attend these events.