

## **WELCOME!**

Dear Student,

You have chosen the University of Florence to complete a part of your studies or you are about to do so.

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 organization). We hope it will make it easier for you to find your place among Florence students.

Throughout 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)**

## **Contents:**

### **Welcome**

#### **1. Surroundings**

- Tuscany and Florence
- How to reach us
- Public transport
- Health care and insurance
- Residence Permit
- National holidays

#### **2. The University**

- Our history
- The School of Mathematical, Physical and Natural Sciences (SMFN)
- The sites
- Academic calendar
- Classes
- Student workload and exams
- Marking system
- Italian language courses
- Internet
- Board and lodge
- University Cafeterias (Mense universitarie)
- Library services
- Sports

#### **3. Erasmus Plus Program**

- International Relations Office
- Erasmus Delegates
- How to get admitted - Erasmus+ Study and Traineeship in the School of Mathematical, Physical and Natural Sciences (SMFN)
- Erasmus Mobility for Study: deadlines
- Erasmus Mobility for Traineeship
- Erasmus day
- Extending the stay
- At the end of the stay and before leaving Florence

# 1. Surroundings

## Tuscany and Florence

Tuscany is a region in central Italy with an area of about 23,000 square kilometers (8,900 sq mi) 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 nature reserves, making Tuscany and its capital Florence a popular tourist destination that attracts millions of people every year. In 2012 the city of Florence became the world's 89th most visited city with over 1.834 million arrivals.

Florence has a population of around half a 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, overcoming the unfortunate internal dispute between Guelfs and Ghibellines. In the 15th century it came under the rule of the Medici family who later became the Grand Dukes of Tuscany. This, in fact, 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 were succeeded in the 18th century by that of the House of Lorraine, when in 1860 Tuscany became part of the Kingdom of Italy of which Florence was the capital from 1865 to 1871. The city has once more taken up its role as an important centre for culture and arts.

Florence contains an exceptional artistic patrimony, glorious testimony to 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 the Della Robbia; Filippo Lippi and l'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 it 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 to the time of Charlemagne, Florence was a university town. Academies, art schools, scientific institutes and cultural centers all contribute to the city's intense activity.

#### **How to reach us**

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 60 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 it to Prato, Pistoia, Montecatini, 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 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](http://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 that 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 subscribe the Italian National Health Service and a doctor will be automatically assigned to them. Moreover, in the unlucky event of getting ill or having health special needs we highly recommend the subscription of the policy. 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](http://www.portaleimmigrazione.it)

Useful links:

Poste Italiane (Italian Postal Center) [www.posteitaliane.it](http://www.posteitaliane.it)

Ministero dell'Interno (Ministry of Interior) [www.interno.it](http://www.interno.it)

Polizia di Stato (State Police) [www.poliziadistato.it](http://www.poliziadistato.it)

Associazione Nazionale Comuni Italiani (Association of Italian City Halls) [www.anci.it](http://www.anci.it)

Immigrazione oggi (immigration today) [www.immigrazioneoggi.it](http://www.immigrazioneoggi.it)

### **Italian public holidays**

1st January

6th January (Epiphany Day)

Easter Monday

25th April (Liberation Day)

1st May (Labour Day)

2nd June (Republic Day)

24th June (St. John's, Patron Saint of Florence)

15th August (Assumption Day)

1st November (All Saints)

8th December (Immaculate Conception)

25th December (Christmas)

26th December (St. Stephen's Day)

## **2. The University**

### **Our history**

The University of Florence can trace its origins to the Studium, which was established in 1321. In 1472 the Studium was moved to Pisa. In 1859, the University re-emerged as "Istituto di Studi Superiori" (Institute of Higher Education). In 1923 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, Humanities, Scientific, Technological and Biomedical areas.

A large part of the yearly 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's Degrees (three-year study program - 180 credits): Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Physics and Astrophysics, Optics and Optometry (Vinci), Computer Science, Natural Sciences, Geological Sciences, Mathematics, Diagnosis and materials for the conservation and restoration and also nine Master's Degrees (further two-year study program - 120 credits: Biology, Molecular Biotechnology, Life Sciences and Materials for the conservation and restoration, Physical Sciences and Astrophysics, Computer Science, Mathematics, Chemical Sciences, Nature and Human Sciences, Geological Sciences and Technologies. 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 areas.

The main site is within the Polo Scientifico e Tecnologico at Sesto Fiorentino. Other classes are held in *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 into two six-months periods.

**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). Each CFU equals to about 25 hours of student work, including lessons (or traineeship) and individual study. A three-year bachelor degree equals to 180 CFUs, each semester's work is about 30 CFUs.

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). 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, as follows

| <b>ITALIAN MARKS</b> | <b>ECTS MARKS</b> |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 30/30 cum laude      | A (excellent)     |
| 29/30                | B (very good)     |
| 27/28                | C (good)          |
| 25/26                | D (satisfactory)  |
| 18/24                | E (pass)          |
| - 18/24              | F, FX (fail)      |

## **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**

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

### **Board and lodge**

Unfortunately we do not arrange accommodation for students. We advise students to arrive a few days in advance to stay in a youth hostel in town and to have a look at the many notices available for students at the various site locations (as well as in local papers. Notices of room rentals are also posted on boards at the main entrances of University Departments, classrooms, and Laboratories. For more information about student 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 must notify the Erasmus Office of their address in Florence and of any subsequent change of residence that may occur. The updating of this data is of great importance since it allows us to establish any necessary contact.

### **University Cafeterias (Mense universitarie)**

All Erasmus students may use cafeteria facilities provided by DSU Toscana. In Florence there are several cafeterias near the main University buildings, these cafeterias offer lunch and dinner at a fixed cheap price. In order to use these facilities, students must apply to DSU Toscana for a Cafeteria Card by showing their ID and a University enrolment certificate.

### **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" aims 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 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) organizes 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 and aquarobics 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 determinately yearly)
- For more info: [www.cus.firenze.it](http://www.cus.firenze.it)

## **3. Erasmus Plus Program**

### **International Relations Office**

The International Relations Office will be the main contact for administrative issues before students 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](mailto: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 2751346.

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

### **Erasmus Delegates of the specific courses**

| DEGREE COURSE   | COORDINATOR       | E-MAIL                     |
|---|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Chimica;<br>LM Scienze Chimiche   | Anna Maria Papini | annamaria.papini@unifi.it  |
| Fisica e<br>Astrofisica;<br>LM Scienze Fisiche<br>e Astrofisiche;<br>Ottica e Optometria  | Franco Bagnoli    | franco.bagnoli@unifi.it    |
| Informatica;<br>LM Informatica  | Antonio Bernini   | antonio.bernini@unifi.it   |
| Matematica;<br>LM Matematica  | Angiolo Farina    | angiolo.farina@unifi.it    |
| Scienze Biologiche;<br>LM Biologia  | Luigia Pazzagli   | luigia.pazzagli@unifi.it   |
| Scienze Geologiche;<br>LM Scienze e<br>Tecnologie<br>Geologiche   | Simonetta Monechi | simonetta.monechi@unifi.it |
| Scienze Naturali;<br>LM Scienze della<br>Natura e dell'Uomo   | Martina Lari      | martina.lari@unifi.it      |
| Diagnostica e<br>Materiali per la<br>conservazione e il<br>restauro;<br>LM in Scienze e<br>materiali per la<br>conservazione e il<br>restauro | Rodorico Giorgi   | rodorico.giorgi@unifi.it   |
| LM Biotecnologie<br>molecolari  | Elisabetta Meacci | elisabetta.meacci@unifi.it |

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

Each student that is interested in coming to the School of Mathematics, Physics 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 names, contact details and degree course of each nominated Erasmus student.

### **Erasmus Mobility for Study: deadlines**

#### **1- Nomination and application**

- I semester : June 30th
- II semester : November 30<sup>th</sup>

Before the above mentioned deadlines the Erasmus student (or his/her home University) shall 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 shall be annexed to the enrollment form. The final time schedule of all the courses will be available not before September 1<sup>ST</sup> of each academic year. Therefore the Learning Agreement (LA) could be finalized only after arriving at the University of Florence in order to avoid overlapping courses.

#### **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 that will have to be finalized within one month from his/her arrival.

#### **Be aware of the following steps:**

Within one week before starting classes, all Erasmus students shall visit: 1) the International Relations Office of the School of Mathematical, Physical and Natural Sciences (SMFN); 2) the Erasmus Delegate of her/his specific course to finalize the LA, based on the time schedule of the courses that the student shall attend in the current semester.

Within one month after his/her arrival, the incoming Erasmus student has the last opportunity to modify the LA.

We remind you that it is recommended that the Erasmus student has at least a B1 level of Italian and English language knowledge because the classes will be held in Italian. The same procedure

shall be followed by the end of February 1) by the Erasmus students arriving on the second semester; 2) by the Erasmus students who decide to attend two semesters. In this case the Erasmus student can ask for modification of the original LA later only for the 2nd semester.

### **Erasmus Mobility for Traineeship**

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

The student shall send:

-Learning Agreement for Traineeship and Letter of Intent signed by the Tutor of the Erasmus Student and by the Director of the Department and the Delegate of International Affairs and Erasmus Program of the hosting Institution.

-A detailed CV including Transcript of Records with grades and a letters of recommendation are required.

The Tutor 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 shall come to:

1) the International Relations Office to be enrolled in the School of Mathematical, Physical and Natural Sciences (SMFN) with the original documents already signed by the sending Institution.

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).

At the end of the traineeship the Erasmus student shall come to the International Relations Office to leave a copy of the Learning Agreement duly filled and signed in every part (before mobility, during mobility -in case of any change occurred- and after mobility) by the Tutor. The last section of the document (after mobility) duly filled, signed and stamped, shall report the title of the activity as well as the number of hours of traineeship.

The International Relations Office will send these documents to the sending Institution informing about the end of the traineeship. The School of Mathematical, Physical and Natural

Sciences will deliver a certificate to the student declaring the number of hours and ECTS obtained.

### **Erasmus day**

The School of Mathematical, Physical and Natural Sciences (SMFN) organizes some social events for Erasmus students. The aim of these events is to inform students about class organization, exam procedures, cultural events and any other information which may help enhance the student's experience in Florence. Students are required to attend these events and unjustified absences will not be accepted.

### **Extending the stay**

Erasmus students attending the University of Florence may ask for an extension that should not exceed the date of September 30th. The request must be done within one month before the end of the original accorded period. The request must be addressed to the International Relations Office.

### **At the end of the stay and before leaving Florence**

Before departure the students hosted within the Erasmus+ Study program must return the student card (libretto) to the School of Mathematical, Physical and Natural Sciences (SMFN)/International Relations Office.

All students (Erasmus+ Study program and Erasmus+ Traineeship) must apply for a certificate of the attendance period (Transcript of records or transcript of work) at the University of Florence in the School of Mathematical, Physical and Natural Sciences (SMFN)/International Relations Office.