

SUMMARY

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IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE VISA & RESIDENCE PERMIT

- What is the difference between a visa & a residence permit?

Visa	Residence permit
Required for some nationalities but not all	Required for all non-Swiss nationals
Delivered by Swiss representations overseas (embassy or consulate)	Delivered by cantonal authorities. In Geneva: Office cantonal de la population et des migrations – OCPM
Valid for 1-3 months Attached to a blank page in your passport	Separate document, valid for 12 months renewable yearly until the end of study programme
Allows you to enter Switzerland Does not allow you to live in Switzerland	Allows you to enter Switzerland and live in the canton that delivered it

- Who needs to apply for a visa?

Please consult the [Swiss State Secretariat for Migration \(SEM\)](#) website to check whether your nationality requires a student visa.

Nationality	Need student visa	Need residence permit
EU/EFTA Non-EU/EFTA, but qualify for visa waiver	No	Yes, prepare and submit online now
Non-EU/EFTA, no visa waiver	Yes	Yes, prepare and submit online now

- When to apply and how long does it take?

Visa applications take 3-5 months to be processed. Be sure to submit your application no later than May. We advise you to start the process at the earliest, for a smooth and stress free experience! If you haven't received a response until mid July, you can contact the admission team with your tracking number and we can try to enquire.

APPLY FOR VISA AND RESIDENCE PERMIT ONLINE

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY BEFORE APPLYING ONLINE

Please note that our admission team maintains continual communication with the Geneva cantonal authorities and that the following new online application process has received endorsement from the OCPM (Cantonal Office for Population and Migration – the Geneva immigration authorities). You may come across inconsistent information on the website of the Swiss representation in your home country; however, the information provided here should be regarded as reliable. For any additional enquirers, please do not hesitate to contact us at admission@graduateinstitute.ch.

IMPORTANT: If you have already started the visa procedure with an embassy, please do not apply online as it will create duplicates and administrative errors.

As the OCPM website is only available in French, we recommend that you use your browser's built-in translator to help you with the application process.

STEP 1 - CREATE A “SIMPLE DIGITAL ACCOUNT” (E-DÉMARCHES) ON THE OCPM WEBSITE

<https://www.ge.ch/acceder-aux-e-demarches/compte-particuliers>

The screenshot shows the OCPM website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the 'ge.ch' logo and icons for 'e-démarches', 'Recherche', and 'Menu'. Below the navigation bar, the main heading is 'S'inscrire aux e-démarches'. A list of steps is provided: 1. L'essentiel en bref, 2. Compte pour particuliers, 3. Compte pour entreprises, 4. Conditions d'utilisation, and 5. J'ai besoin d'aide. The second step, '2. Compte pour particuliers', is selected and expanded. It contains the text: 'Vous êtes un particulier et souhaitez créer votre compte pour accéder aux e-démarches.' followed by 'Créer un compte simple'. Below this, it states: 'La création d'un compte simple ne nécessite pas de vérifier votre identité. Il donne accès à un nombre restreint de e-démarches.' and 'Ce compte est immédiatement utilisable. Il suffit de compléter puis valider le formulaire d'inscription jusqu'à l'étape 3/3.' A red circle highlights the 'Créer un compte simple' button, with a red arrow pointing to it and the text 'click here' next to it. To the right, there are sections for 'Voir aussi' (Mon identité numérique GenèveID, Mon espace e-démarches) and 'Actualité' with a small image of hands holding a magnifying glass.

For this online registration, you only need to provide your phone number and a valid email address. Enter the following information and follow the steps to register.

Attention: veuillez saisir vos noms, prénoms et date de naissance officiels, tels qu'ils sont indiqués sur votre pièce d'identité.

Nom *

<----- Enter your surname

Prénom *

<----- Enter your first name

Date de naissance (jj.mm.aaaa) *

<----- Enter your date of birth (format: dd/mm/yyyy)

Conditions d'utilisation *

J'accepte les conditions générales d'utilisation (CGU)

<----- Click the button

Email *

<----- Enter your personal email address (Gmail recommended)

<----- Click 'Verifier mon email', you will receive a code for verification

After email verification, you need to setup your password and verify your phone number.

Sécurité

Sécurité de votre compte

Pour garantir la confidentialité de vos données, l'accès aux e-démarches requiert la saisie d'un **mot de passe** et d'un **code de sécurité** à usage unique envoyé sur votre téléphone, par SMS ou message vocal. ([en savoir plus](#))

Mot de passe *

<----- Enter your password

Confirmez le mot de passe *

<----- Re-enter your password

Numéro de téléphone *

<----- Enter your phone number with country code but without + and 00
E.g.: France - 33XXXXXXXXXX
India - 91XXXXXXXXXX
US - 1XXXXXXXXXX

Mode d'envoi du code *

Envoyé par SMS

Dicté par message vocal

<----- Click 'Envoyé par SMS', you will receive a verification code by SMS. **(recommended)**
Click 'Dicté par message vocal', you will receive a call in French for verification numbers
Click 'Vérifier mon numéro'

You will receive a confirmation email from OCPM once your account is created. If the website asks you for a AVS number, please close the tab and ignore it.

STEP 2 - CLICK THE LINK BELOW TO APPLY FOR YOUR STUDENT RESIDENCE PERMIT

<https://www.ge.ch/demander-permis-sejour-etudiant>

Demander un permis de séjour pour étudiant

1. L'essentiel en bref

2. Je suis ressortissant d'un pays membre de l'UE-AELE

3. Je suis ressortissant d'un Etat hors UE-AELE

4. Réponses aux questions fréquentes sur les permis pour étude

1. L'essentiel en bref

Si vous êtes étranger et souhaitez résider et étudier à Genève, vous aurez besoin d'un permis de séjour. Les conditions d'obtention de cette autorisation sont différentes selon votre nationalité.

- Vous êtes ressortissant d'un pays membre de l'UE/AELE et souhaitez déposer votre demande de permis pour études ?

[Demande de permis pour étudiant UE/AELE](#)

Click here if you hold a passport from from an EU/EFTA country

- Vous êtes ressortissant d'un pays tiers et souhaitez déposer votre demande de permis pour études?

[Demande de permis pour étudiant d'un Etat tiers](#)

Click here if you hold a passport from a non-EU/EFTA country, or your nationality qualifies for a visa waiver

Voir aussi

[Demander un permis de séjour pour étudiant](#)

Partagez cette page



[Imprimer le livret](#)

You will arrive on another page, scroll below to bottom of page. Click "Accéder au formulaire de demande en ligne" (access the online form).

Déposer une demande de permis étudiant

Votre demande de permis peut se faire en ligne ou par courrier.

En cas de questions relatives à la manière de compléter le formulaire en ligne, nous vous invitons à consulter notre FAQ disponible sous OCPM pratique.

[click here](#)

[Accéder au formulaire de demande en ligne](#)

[Télécharger le formulaire à retourner par courrier](#)

Then, enter your digital account ID and password, and you will find an **English version** of the form at this stage.

STEP 3 - FILL OUT THE RESIDENCE PERMIT APPLICATION FORM

Follow the steps to fill out the form, upload the required documents, pay the residence permit application fee and submit your application.

You can find the flowchart for more detail information at the end of this guideline document.

DOCUMENTS CHECKLIST

EU/EFTA NATIONALS

- Colour copy of a valid identity document;
- 1 passport-size photo;
- Proof of enrollment in school (our admission attestation);
- Evidence of financial means and/or proof of support (form O if your guarantor resides in Switzerland);
- In case of subletting or renting accommodation in Geneva from a third party, an attestation from the landlord established according to form AL (with a copy of the main lease and a copy of the landlord's identity document);
- Copy of the departure certificate from the canton of origin, if you have previously resided in another Swiss canton.

NON EU/EFTA NATIONALS OR QUALIFIES FOR A VISA WAIVER

- Colour copy of a valid identity document;
- 1 passport-size photo;
- Proof of enrollment in school (our admission attestation);
- CV/resume;
- Letter of motivation indicating your intentions upon completion of studies;
- Study plan indicating the number of weekly class hours, schedules, details of subjects and programme, total duration of studies, as well as the degree targeted from our website;
- Written commitment to leave Switzerland at the end of the planned studies
- Evidence of financial means and/or proof of support (form O if your guarantor resides in Switzerland);
- In case of subletting or renting accommodation in Geneva from a third party, an attestation from the landlord established according to form AL (with a copy of the main lease and a copy of the landlord's identity document);
- Copy of your higher education degree diploma(s);
- Plans of internships or employment (if applicable);
- Extract of your criminal record (if easily available);
- Copy of the departure certificate from the canton of origin if you have previously resided in another Swiss canton.

FAQs

1. What is the difference between online registration with OCPM and applying through the embassy in your country?

The online process with OCPM will be easier; with your initial registration, your file is automatically reviewed for visa and residence permit. When you arrive in Geneva, you do not need to re-submit all the documents to complete your residence permit procedure. However, if you apply for your visa through the embassy, you will need to start a new residence permit application.

2. I have started an application with my embassy, but can I register with OCPM now?

If you have already started the procedure with an embassy, please **DO NOT** use OCPM online form as it will create duplicates and administrative errors.

3. I cannot receive an SMS code to activate my OCPM account, what should I do?

If you cannot receive an SMS code in your country, you can try to receive a phone call (unfortunately the verification code is only spoken in French) or apply for your visa through the local embassy.

4. I am an EU/EFTA national, I do not need a visa, can I apply for the residence permit later?

EU/EFTA nationals can apply for a residence permit maximum 3 months before arrival, no later than 14 days after arrival. It is **IMPORTANT** to mark your address in Geneva and the exact date of arrival on your application form, as the OCPM will send the subsequent communication directly to that address on the date that you indicated in the form.

5. I do not have my accommodation finalised. What should I give as an address in Switzerland?

You can have a temporary address during the application. It can be a hotel booking or confirmation from the residence you have applied for. However, make sure to notify the OCPM if you change your address, because all communication from the OCPM will be postal.

6. What documents to submit as evidence of financial means and/or proof of support?

Proof of financial means: ideally, approx. CHF 2,000 per month. For example: bank statements; scholarship letter, if any; proof of any loans and available savings; letter from a guarantor or parent, stating that s/he will assist you financially during your studies (dated and signed); any paid employment plans.

7. What is the cost of the OCPM online application?

- EU/EFTA nationals: CHF 65
- Non-EU/EFTA nationals: CHF 95

This cost is only for your permit application, you will need to pay additional fees for a biometric appointment after your arrival, [if applicable](#).

8. How to answer the following questions on the OCPM application form?

Course end date => Please indicate the same date on your admission attestation letter

Courses taken in capacity as an intern / external => Please choose 'External'

9. I haven't received any email confirmation from OCPM, is my application complete?

Once you submit your online application, you will receive an automatic email from OCPM, which means your application was received. It is normal not to receive further communications from OCPM within 3 months. What we can do is be patient and wait. If you have any doubts about your visa/permit application, please do not hesitate to send an email to admission@graduateinstitute.ch.

10. What are the final steps for the residence permit when I arrive in Geneva?

It is mandatory to announce your arrival to OCPM within 14 days of arrival. Subsequently, you will receive a letter by post to arrange a biometric appointment. Following this appointment, your residence permit card will be delivered to you by post within 2 weeks. The entire process usually takes 1-3 months from the time of your arrival in Geneva.

11. Who qualifies as a 'non-EU/EFTA national but visa waiver' applicant?

If you possess a passport from any of the following countries: Andorra, Australia, Great Britain, Japan, Malaysia, Monaco, New Zealand, San Marino, Singapore, Sultanate of Brunei and Vatican.

12. I am a non-EU/EFTA national, but I have a valid Schengen 'visa C' on my passport or my nationality allow me to travel to Switzerland less than 90 days. Can I come to Switzerland without a student visa and apply for my student residence permit directly after arrival?

If you are already in Switzerland, you can apply for your residence permit via OCPM online application form, OCPM will decide if they accept your file. The application procedure is same as an EU/EFTA national applicant. However, we do not recommend this way due to the uncertainty of being granted a residence permit.

13. Is it possible to study in Geneva but live in another canton in Switzerland?

Contact the Population Office of the commune where you will be living to enquire about the possibility for obtaining your residence permit. The OCPM online application portal is not available in your case, because OCPM is only in charge of the Geneva canton application. Swiss regulations require residence in the same canton where the school is located. Exceptions must be evaluated by the other canton.

14. Is it possible to update the information on the application form after submitting my permit application?

You will not be able to modify the information on your online form after submission. If you have an urgent modification, for example, a new address, name, or financial means, please use the [online contact form](#) (*Formulaire de contact OCPM*).

15. I have not received my bachelor degree diploma yet, can I start the online application process?

You can begin the process now, and we recommend you start it as soon as possible. If you do not have a bachelor degree diploma, you can upload your current highest education diploma (if applicable), your latest transcripts, your current university enrolment confirmation, or an official document confirming your expected date of degree conferral, under the 'copy of diplomas' section.

16. If my family members would like to come to Switzerland to live with me, what kind of permit do they need to apply for? How to apply for it?

They need to apply for a family reunion (*regroupement familial*) permit. If you apply for your visa and residence permit online, you can submit their applications at the same time, in the same form.

17. Are the 'letter of motivation' and the 'written commitment to leave Switzerland' considered to be the same document?

They are not the same document. The letter provides justification for coming to study in Switzerland, at the Geneva Graduate Institute. The written commitment document explains your plans following the completion of your study programme, you can find a template [here](#).

18. What type of permit I will receive? What is the duration of the permit?

As a student, you will receive a permit B, generally issued for one year. You will need to renew it for your second year. The renewal process is simple and straightforward.

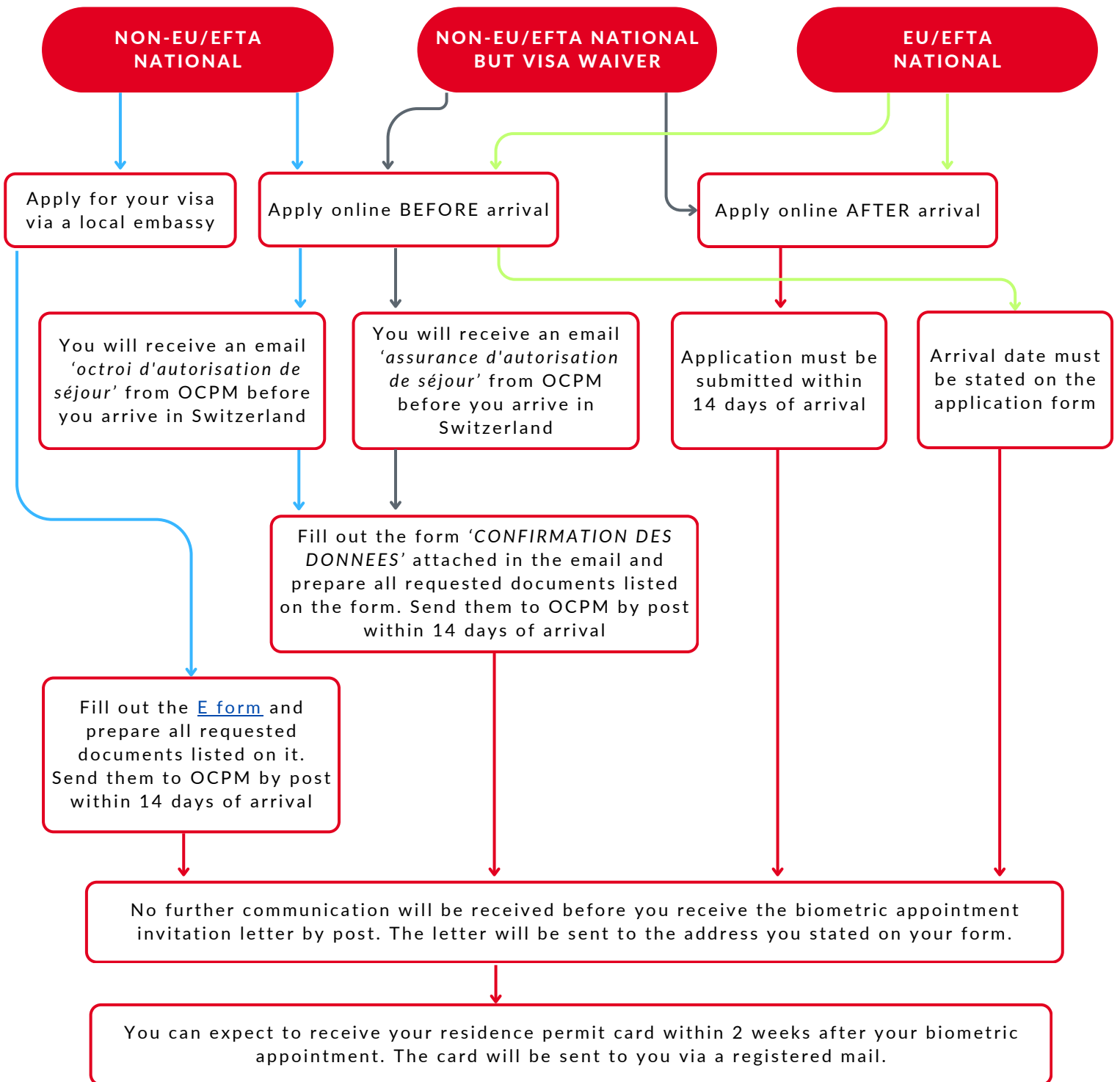
If your permit covers the full duration of your study programme, a renewal will not be necessary.

19. What document do I need to upload under the 'registration certificate' section?

Your admission attestation, not your admission letter.

20. Where can I find the detailed plan of studies?

Please click the [course catalogue](#) to find your programme, then you will find the study plan document under programme presentation.



OCPM OFFICE

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BIOMETRIC CENTER

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1214 Vernier