

PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT THE SIBELIUS ACADEMY



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1. WELCOME TO HELSINKI!

We are happy that you have chosen to study at the Sibelius Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki, a state-owned university providing the highest education in the arts in Finland.

This guide is designed for exchange students and foreign degree students to help you to plan your stay and studies at the Sibelius Academy. It includes practical information that will be of use when planning your arrival and life in Helsinki. This guide will be useful for you before your departure for Finland as well as during your stay.

We hope that your stay in Finland will be beneficial for your studies and an unforgettable adventure.

WHAT TO PACK FOR FINLAND?

Finland is not *awfully* cold. Regarding temperature, Finland is more favourable than most of the countries at the same latitude. This is because the warm Gulf Stream from the Atlantic gives us a surprisingly mild climate. However, Helsinki can be windy during the autumn and winter.

By mid-April the sun is above the horizon for 14 to 15 hours in southern Finland and 16 hours in northern Finland. Around Midsummer in northern Finland, the sun does not set for several weeks. In Utsjoki, Lapland, the longest “day” of summer lasts for 70 days. Even in more southern parts it does not really get dark, as the days are separated only by a couple of hours of twilight. This is why Finland is also called “Land of the Midnight Sun”.

The long skiing season in North Finland begins in October and lasts at least until mid-May. In Southern Finland, the snow usually arrives in December or January. Warm winter clothing, such as a coat, good winter boots, gloves, and a woollen cap that covers the ears, is recommended. Keep in mind the wind-chill factor. A cold day will feel even colder when it is windy.

3. THE SIBELIUS ACADEMY

HISTORY

The Sibelius Academy, located in the centre of Helsinki, was founded in 1882, and was given its present name in 1939. The name is derived from Jean Sibelius who holds a supreme position in the history of Finnish music. Sibelius was a student at the Academy, named Helsingin Musiikkiopisto at the time, in 1885–90. He studied both the violin and composition, and his compositions were frequently performed in concerts at the Academy. In 1890–92 Sibelius taught music theory and later also composition at the Academy.

In 1966 the Sibelius Academy was granted the status of an institution of higher education. It was a private college until 1980, when the administrative reforms made the Academy subordinate to the state. As part of a state arts university, the Sibelius Academy plays an integral part in the system of higher education in Finland, offering not only Bachelor and Master of Music degrees but also Licentiate and Doctoral degrees. It is the largest music academy in Scandinavia.

The University of the Arts Helsinki was launched on 1 January 2013 with the merger of the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts, the Sibelius Academy, and the Theatre Academy. The University of the Arts is composed of three academies, equal in their academic contribution and cultural influence.

LOCATIONS

M-building (the new Helsinki Music Centre, opposite the Parliament House)
Street address: Töölönlahdenkatu 16 (Sibelius Academy entrance)

- Helsinki Music Centre Main Concert Hall
- Camerata Hall (Chamber music)
- Sonore Hall (Vocal music)
- Organo Hall (Organ music)
- Black Box (Amplified music etc.)
- Office of Rectors
- Office of Symphony Orchestra staff and Concert producers
- Music Technology studios
- Jazz music premises
- Folk music premises
- Library
- Café-Restaurant

N-building

Street address: Nervanderinkatu 13 (behind the National Museum)

- **International Relations Office, 2nd floor**
- Student union office
- Classrooms and rehearsal rooms
- Café-Restaurant

R-building

Street address: Pohjoinen Rautatiekatu 9
(behind the Parliament House)

- Sibelius Academy Concert Hall
- Chamber Music Hall
- Organ Hall
- classrooms and rehearsal rooms
- Café

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OFFICE

The International Relations Office is located on the 2nd floor of the N-building.

Staff:

Aino Jalkanen
Coordinator, International Relations
Tel. +358 40 710 4336
aino.jalkanen@uniarts.fi

Leena Veijonsuo
Specialist, International Relations
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STUDYING AT THE SIBELIUS ACADEMY

The learning environment at the Sibelius Academy is creative, innovative and encouraging. Interaction between students and teachers is casual and informal.

According to the degree structure, students first complete the lower university (Bachelor's) degree and then go on to study towards the higher (Master's) degree without an additional entrance exam. If the student has previously received a Bachelor's degree or an equivalent degree in Finland or abroad, he/she can directly apply to the 2.5-year Master's programme.

Bachelor of Music (BMus):

- ❑ consists of 180 ECTS credits
- ❑ should be completed in 3 years
- ❑ Curriculum structure:
 - Major subject min. 90 credits
 - Thesis or other demonstration of skill: 6-10 credits
 - Minor studies min. 40 credits
 - Language studies 8 credits
 - Optional studies min. 10 credits

Master of Music (MMus):

- ❑ consists of 150 ECTS credits
- ❑ corresponds to 2 and a half years' study after the completion of a lower university degree
- ❑ Curriculum structure:
 - Major subject min. 100 credits
 - Thesis or other demonstration of proficiency 20-40 credits
 - Optional studies min. 30 credits

The Sibelius Academy also offers versatile doctoral programmes. The Licentiate of Music and Doctor of Music -degrees are available in the Arts, Research and Applied Study Programmes. The Doctor of Music -degree consists of 240 ECTS credits.

Credit system and grading scales

Sibelius Academy uses the European Credit Transfer System, ECTS.

One ECTS credit = 26.7 hours of work (attended lessons, independent work and self-study)

Two alternative grading scales are applied to both degree and exchange studies:

Numerical evaluation scale	OR	Pass/Fail
5 = excellent		Pass = a
4 = very good		Fail = i
3 = good		
2 = satisfactory		
1 = pass		
0 = fail		

Exchange students NB! In case your home institution requires an assessment (mark/grade), please discuss this with your teacher *at the beginning* of the course. We do not provide grades on any other scale besides the Sibelius Academy's.

ACADEMIC YEAR AND SEMESTERS

Sibelius Academy Academic year has two semesters, autumn and spring semester. The semester dates vary annually, but in general the autumn term is from September until December and the spring term is from January until the end of May. In the spring, the tuition normally ends by the end of April, but some postponed lessons, individual lessons and course exams may take place up until the end of May.

There is no actual summer semester at the Sibelius Academy. However, some summer courses are offered – including the Sibelius Summer Academy – in June and August. The Academy is closed for the month of July.

INDIVIDUAL STUDY PLAN: HOPS

An individual study plan (abbreviated as “HOPS” in Finnish) is drawn up to support the progress of studies and to provide study guidance. The study plan defines the content and order of studies. One is made for every student when they begin their studies at the university, and the plan is checked annually.

At the Sibelius Academy individual study plans need to be accepted by the student’s department. According to the University Regulations on Education, a student without an approved individual study plan may not receive tuition. For guidance in questions concerning HOPS, please contact the Department Study Coordinator of your degree programme.

STUDENT SERVICES

Any questions concerning studies at the Sibelius Academy can be addressed to siba.opintopalvelut@uniarts.fi.

The Department Study Coordinator of your degree programme will also help you with regards to the individual study plan, content of the studies, recognition, etc.

Information Desks

Each building has an Information Desk, where you can ask for guidance and help in practical matters such as keys, forms & certificates and how to find places and people.

STUDENT UNION ARTSU (TAIYO)

University of the Arts Student Union ArtSU (TaiYo in Finnish) is a student organisation that promotes the interest of its members in the University of the Arts, provides services for students and organises events and activities. The Student Union membership is obligatory for all degree students, except doctoral students, and available also for exchange students. Being a Student Union member is very much a part of Finnish academic culture. Student Unions in Finland are internationally renowned, and joining is considered par for the course.

Student Tutoring/Mentoring

Every international first-year degree or exchange student has a student tutor. The student tutor system is set up by the Student Union in order to help the international students settle in Finland. Tutors give advice and help with matters regarding the university, student community and everyday life. However, the Study Coordinators at the departments provide academic tutoring. Student tutoring is focused on the first months of studies.

Membership

To become a member of the Student Union you must pay a membership fee. The Student Union membership fee is confirmed for each year; consult the Student Union website to see the yearly fee. Regarding doctoral students and exchange students, the membership is optional (the membership for the doctoral students and exchange students does not include FSHS health care services, and for the doctoral students the benefits are not as extensive as for the bachelor and master students).

Every ArtSU member can order a **student card** (approximately 15 euros) or download it as an app. The card entitles the holder to subsidised lunches in the student cafeteria, reduced prices on long-distance transportation (bus/rail/ferry/plane), reduced prices at several theatres, concert halls and most museums and art galleries. Furthermore, several shops, restaurants, travel agencies etc. provide discounts to student card holders. You can order and pay the student card via the internet at www.frank.fi, where you can also find more information on the discounts.

Degree students can also use the services of the Finnish Student Health Service (FSHS), which provides general, mental and oral health care services for undergraduate students. Most appointments are free of charge, only dental care and appointments with specialists (other than psychiatrists) are subject to a small charge.

Please note that in the beginning of the academic year, the delivery of the student card will take approximately one month, whereas you can download the app without a delay. During this time, the Certificate of Attendance or *Kela meal subsidy card* will give you discounts in most places, such as the student cafeterias.

Other Services

The Student Union maintains a "gig agency" service, which supplies student contact information for people looking for performers or teachers. For further information and registration, see the Student Union webpage at www.taiyo.fi. ArtSU also runs the Space for Free Arts, which is a forum for Student Union members to organise their concerts, performances and exhibitions, and offers grants for projects within the student community.

Together with other student unions, ArtSU promotes the interests of students and takes care of students' rights both within the university and in Finnish Society in general. ArtSU and its committees also promote fellowship between students by organising different activities, such as parties and other events. The Student Union publishes a weekly newsletter about hot topics and things students should be aware of. This newsletter is distributed to students' SibA e-mail addresses. Members of ArtSU also get a free calendar.

Student Union contact details

Office: N-building, 4th floor

Opening hours: check ArtSU's webpage!

Internet: <https://taiyo.fi/in-english/>

Contact email: taiyo-toimisto@uniarts.fi

The Student Union room is open for all students. You can find it in N-building (4th floor). There are also Student Union rooms at the Theatre Academy and Academy of Fine Arts premises.

OSTINATO – THE SHEET MUSIC SHOP

10% DISCOUNT FOR MUSIC STUDENTS!

Ostinato is a sheet music shop founded in 1979 by music students and still owned by Sibelius Academy Students' Union. Our customers include amateur and professional musicians as well as libraries, choirs, orchestras, etc. We specialize in classical music but also carry Finnish folk music and a selection of jazz and popular styles. We have a wide variety of music books and are exclusive distributors of Sibelius Academy publications.

We enjoy a reputation for leaving no stone unturned when sourcing rare material for our customers, and an increasing number of musicians from outside Finland turn to us when looking for sheet music. We provide our customers with music by publishers from all over the world.

Ostinato shares a space at M-building (Music Centre) near the Mannerheimintie entrance with music record shop Fuga.

Check the opening hours from Ostinato's website.

We look forward to getting to know you!

Contact:

Mannerheimintie 13a B
tel. +358 207 070443
www.ostinato.fi
ostinato@ostinato.fi

ostinato
nuottikauppa • sheet music shop



FUGA RECORD SHOP
10% DISCOUNT TO
SIBELIUS ACADEMY STUDENTS!

Contact:

Mannerheimintie 13a B
tel. +358-9-700 18251
fuga@fuga.fi
www.fuga.fi

SIBELIUS ACADEMY LIBRARY

Location: Helsinki Music Centre
Töölönlahdenkatu 16 C

1st floor: loaning department, computers, listening rooms
2nd floor: reference library and reading room

The collections and services of the Sibelius Academy Library are open to all. The library card is free of charge. The library's collection consists of books, theses and dissertations, printed music and sound recordings, music reference databases as well as a selection of music magazines. The library's collection of foreign music and music literature is the largest in Finland. The library also has a collection of music manuscripts from Finnish composers.

There are several computers available for students and researchers in the library.

With the Uniarts user id, you have access to several music, art and theater databases. The vast electronic collection is available for use where ever you are!

For general information (loaning policies, contact information, exceptional opening hours etc.), see the library's website: <http://lib.uniarts.fi/en>

COMPUTING

User accounts for exchange students will be opened and given during the orientation period. You will then receive your user account name and a randomly generated password. You can access your account after you have changed your password at <https://password.uniarts.fi>. You can also visit any of the IT Helpdesk service points on campuses to change your passwords. Remember to have official identification with you.

Wireless network (WLAN)

University of the Arts Helsinki has a free public wireless network available in all buildings called "Uniarts public". The password for the network is "internet".

Computing facilities

- 1 PC classroom (M-S5119)
- 1 Mac classroom (M-S5101)
- Internet kiosks in hallways
- Library in Music Centre (M building): 1st floor: 10 PC:s. 2nd floor: 2 Macs, 2 PC:s, 2 scanners

Software and equipment in the IT classrooms:

PC

- Windows 10, Microsoft Office, Finale, Sibelius, Audacity, Photoshop etc.
- Midi keyboard
- Secure printing

Mac:

- macOS, Microsoft Office, Finale, Sibelius, Audacity, Logic Pro, Band-in-a-box, Photoshop etc.
- Midi keyboard
- Secure printing

Users' Network Home Folders (where to store your own personal files):

- Windows computers: Home drive (H:\)
- Mac computers: icon on Desktop with your username

Email

Web browser: <http://webmail.uniarts.fi>

Helpdesk

The IT Support helpdesk is meant for helping all the students of The University in using workstations and software. Helpdesk also provides support in cases of error, in email, printing/copying and network related problems, and answers all computer related questions. IT Helpdesk service point at M-building (S5118) is open on weekdays between 10AM and 4PM)

Normal call costs apply (local network charge/mobile phone charge). Help requests can be submitted by email at any time of the day.

Telephone: +358 294 47 2200 (open on weekdays between 8:30AM and 4PM)

Email: help@uniarts.fi

Printing and photocopying

University uses a secure printing solution where students print documents to a personal printing queue called Turvatulostus or Secure printing. Documents from this personal secure printing queue can be printed out with any multifunction device in this university. In each building, there are several multifunction printers eg. printer/copier/scanner devices.

You will receive a printing quota (400 B&W pages per academic year) for free, and any additional prints can be bought online. You will need to authenticate yourself to the printer to use it. This is done with HSL travel card or Uniarts account & password. Specific instructions can be found at the university's intranet, Artsi: <http://artsi.uniarts.fi/en/it-and-telephone/printing>

Mobile printing

With mobile printing students can send documents to secure printing from their own personal devices (smartphone or laptop for example). Send the file you want to print as an email attachment from your uniarts email account to address print@uniarts.fi. Then go to the multifunction device, log in and print the document.

Keys

You will obtain an electronic key, which enables you to enter the computer and rehearsal rooms as well as all the three buildings outside the office hours. The keys will be given to you during orientation.

COMMUNICATIONS: INTRANET, EMAIL-LIST

Artsi is the intranet for University of the Arts Helsinki students and staff. You need to obtain your personal user account in order to access Artsi. Please see the *Computing* chapter.

SibA-email (firstname.lastname@uniarts.fi) is an essential channel of information. Your department may send important and sometimes urgent announcements to this email-address, and **therefore it is necessary to check it regularly.**

Check also the Facebook groups for exchange students!

STUDENT RESTAURANTS

Student restaurants are located in each of the Sibelius Academy buildings. They offer lunch, snacks, coffee and other refreshments. Students owning a student card, Kela meal subsidy card, (or Certificate of Attendance) get a reduced price on the lunch. The cost is approximately 2,60 - 4,80 €. To get the price reduction, you have to show your student card/Certificate of Attendance when paying for the lunch.

The student card entitles you to reduced lunch prices also in other student restaurants, such as **Unicafé** restaurants at the Helsinki University premises: <https://www.unicafe.fi/en>.

PRACTICE ROOMS

As a present student of the Sibelius -Academy, you are entitled to book certain facilities and practice in separate practice classrooms, in meeting facilities with certain restrictions, and in teaching classrooms when they are free.

Practice rooms are found in all the academy buildings and they can be booked individually through the Peppi Classroom booking system. Some of the practice rooms in N building are queued for. You can browse the facilities' booking status and make bookings for practising through the Peppi system:

<https://student.peppi.uniarts.fi/>

The basic rules for using the rehearsal rooms are:

- When using a room, let the others know that the room is occupied by locking the room, switching the lamp sign on or turning the plate to red.
- When leaving the room switch the lamp off or turn the plate to green. You are allowed to be away from the room for 30 minutes. After this, you lose your right to the room.

4. ACCOMMODATION

Please note that the Sibelius Academy is **NOT** responsible for arranging your accommodation. However, we will do our best to assist you in case you face problems in finding accommodation. Since the student housing system is extremely congested in September and there will not be enough rooms available, it is very important to start processing housing applications as soon as you are accepted.

Finding suitable accommodation in the capital region can be challenging. The rental level is high (approx. 600-800€ for a studio apartment in Helsinki) and there is a lack of student housing in the region. The rooms in the student housing system cost €300-550/month. It is very difficult to find a furnished room under €400. The peak time is at the beginning of the academic year, in particular. Apply early and reserve time for finding an apartment. Please do not assume that you will be able to find something cheaper upon arrival!

It is recommended to apply for an apartment simultaneously through various channels, as long as you remember to cancel the unnecessary applications after finding an apartment. When you are offered an apartment, do not wait for another offer if the apartment responds to your expectations at least to a certain extent.

Finding an affordable apartment might be very difficult. Your possibilities to find an apartment are improved if you are willing to live outside the center and campus areas. Remember that it is easy to travel around Helsinki region: the public transport in Helsinki is ranked among the best in Europe! You can check the transport connections from your apartment to the center or campus areas at Helsinki Region Transport Journey Planner <http://www.reittiopas.fi/en/> (or Google Maps).

We recommend the following student housing possibilities:

Sibelius Academy Student Housing Foundation, Clavis

Clavis is a quite small hall of residence for Sibelius Academy students only. Exchange students can also apply for a room in Clavis.

- Clavis website: <https://en.clavishouse.fi/>

There will not be many rooms available at Clavis, so please apply for other alternatives as well!

HOAS – the Foundation for Student Housing in the Helsinki region

HOAS offers rooms in shared apartments and studios. HOAS has reserved a quota of shared apartments for exchange students.

- HOAS website for exchange students: <http://www.hoas.fi/exchange/>
- HOAS website for degree students: <http://www.hoas.fi/en/>

Forenom

Forenom is a private, more upscale accommodation service provider. Apartments are fully furnished and equipped for quick moving in and comfortable living. Forenom offers flats for both short and long-term needs. The rent starts from approximately 500€/month/person (basic apartments). Forenom apartments are only rented for a group of flatmates. NOTE: You have to form the group of flatmates yourself before an apartment can be rented.

- Forenom: <http://forenom.fi/en/>

Other websites for rental apartments:

- VVO: www.vvo.fi/en
- Vuokraovi: <http://www.vuokraovi.com/haku/vuokra-asunnot?locale=en>

Temporary Accommodation

If you need temporary accommodation when coming to the Helsinki area and before getting into your permanent accommodation, there are a number of hostels available.

- Find a comprehensive list at: <http://www.hostels.com/helsinki/finland>

Again, please apply early and reserve time for finding an apartment. And please do not assume that you will be able to find something cheaper upon arrival!

5. RESIDENCE PERMIT, REGISTRATIONS

A. Degree students

NON-EU/ETA NATIONALS

Residence Permit

A student who has been accepted to study at the Sibelius Academy must apply for a residence permit before arrival in Finland, at the Finnish Embassy or Consulate in their home country. It is recommended to apply for the residence permit as soon as you have received a confirmation of your study place. Students should apply for the Finnish ID-code with the residence permit application. See the instructions from the Finnish Immigration Service website at <https://migri.fi/en/residence-permit-application-for-studies>

A residence permit is valid for up to one (or two) year(s) and it can be extended at the Finnish Immigration Services while in Finland. For extending the residence permit student needs to have at least 45 ECTS completed during the previous study year.

EU/ETA NATIONALS (except Nordic citizens)

EU-Registration

EU citizens and citizens of Liechtenstein and Switzerland must register their right to reside in Finland within the first three months of the stay. The Finnish Immigration Services handles the registration, except for Nordic citizens, who only register at a Local Register Office (Maistraatti).

Complete the registration application in the e-service Enter Finland or fill in the paper application and submit it at one of the service points of the Finnish Immigration Service. You should submit the application within three months of the date of entry into Finland. There is a processing fee for the registration. You can pay the fee in the e-service Enter Finland or at the Finnish Immigration Service when submitting your application or proving your identity. When you have completed your application, book an appointment in the appointment system of the Finnish Immigration Service to prove your identity.

Finnish Immigration Services address in Helsinki: Käenkuja 3aA, 00101 Helsinki

See the instructions for registration at <http://www.migri.fi/>

Enter Finland: <https://enterfinland.fi/eServices>

ALL NATIONALITIES

Municipal Registration

Upon arrival, the student is required to report to the Local Register Office (Maistraatti) and register the same information as Finnish citizens (name, date of birth, nationality, familial relationships and address) in the Population Information system. Students should also ask for a Finnish ID code while registering to Maistraatti. Only students who have completed the municipal registration are entitled to the student discount in the local transportation.

Finnish ID code needs to be informed to the University of the Arts student services.

Helsinki Maistraatti: Lintulahdenkuja 2, 2. floor

<http://www.maistraatti.fi/en/>

B. Exchange students

NON-EU NATIONALS

Exchange students coming from outside of Europe must acquire a residence permit (in advance) if their studies in Finland last for more than three months.

Students should apply for the Finnish ID-code with the residence permit application. If you are staying in Finland less than three months, you do not need a residence permit but you do need a visa.

EU/EEA NATIONALS (except Nordic citizens)

Exchange students, who are citizens of EU-countries, Liechtenstein or Switzerland, are advised to register their right to reside in Finland in case the stay lasts for more than three months. Registration takes place at the Finnish Immigration Services.

See the instructions for registering at <http://www.migri.fi/>

NORDIC CITIZENS are NOT required to register to the Finnish system (EU-registration) during their exchange study period.

Personal Identity Code and Municipal Registration

The Finnish personal identity code (formerly known as the Social Security Number) is issued to Finnish citizens born in or outside Finland. A foreign citizen whose residence in Finland is permanent or exceeds one year is also issued a personal identity code. Persons staying in Finland on a temporary basis can be issued the code if the Local Register Office deems it warranted on the basis of the law.

International degree students and exchange students are advised to acquire a personal identity code. The University of the Arts needs to collect the Finnish ID code of all the students and you may need the personal identity code in connection with salary payments, bank transactions or health services. Students are asked to inform the personal identity code to the student services.

Non-EU/ETA nationals apply for the personal identity code in the residence permit application.

EU/ETA nationals and Nordic citizens apply for the personal identity code at the Local Register Office – “Maistraatti”.

Check your orientation programme to see if there is a temporary Municipal Registration service organized at Sibelius-Academy during the meeting days!

See further information at <http://www.maistraatti.fi/en/>

6. HEALTH CARE AND INSURANCE

STUDENT HEALTH CARE: FSHS (only for degree students from 1.1.2021!)

The Finnish Student Health Service FSHS (in Finnish: Ylioppilaiden terveydenhoitosäätiö YTHS) provides general, mental and oral health care services. You can use our services if you are studying for a Bachelor's or Master's degree at a university or other institution of higher education and you have paid your student union membership fee to a student union that is affiliated to the FSHS. Please remember that FSHS only provides basic health care services and does not e.g. perform extensive medical operations.

Please note that FSHS does not pay any further medical examinations or treatment in hospital polyclinics, even if an FSHS doctor has issued the referral. It is important that you have your individual insurance for that.

Read more: www.yths.fi/en/internationalstudents

Service numbers (on weekdays Mon-Fri) in the FSHS unit in Helsinki can be seen on our website www.yths.fi/en/ > Appointments: Helsinki.

What to do when FSHS is closed?

If you should require acute treatment when the FSHS Helsinki is closed, please contact your municipal health center or the public health consultation phone

tel. 09 310 10023. The consultation is available in Finnish, Swedish and English and is open 24 hours every day of the year.

Exchange students are no longer entitled to the services of the Finnish Student Health Service FSHS from 1.1.2021. If you wish to benefit from the FSHS services during the autumn semester 2020, you need to become a member of the student union and pay the membership fee.

NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE

Students who come from the Nordic countries are automatically entitled to the same health care as Finnish citizens.

EU and EEA nationals have access to medical care at the municipal health care centre in Finland. For this, they need to apply for the European Health Insurance Card in their own country. EU/EEA citizens, who have the European Health Insurance Card, are entitled to the same municipal health care at the same prices as Finnish citizens. Please note, however, that this does NOT mean that health care is free of charge. If a student wants all expenses covered in case of an accident or illness, it is advisable to take out personal insurance. Hospital and doctors' fees are high in Finland and the Sibelius Academy is not responsible for such fees. Therefore, it is recommended that students take out an insurance policy for the duration of their stay in Finland.

Non-EU/EEA nationals must attach details of their comprehensive health insurance cover to their residence permit application. For studies of less than two years in duration, the student must have private insurance, which primarily covers the costs of medical treatment up to 100.000 €.

More information can be found on the Finnish Immigration Service website:

<http://migri.fi/en/insurance>

EU/EEA nationals are recommended to bring along their European Health Insurance Card, which entitles them to the same public health care as Finnish citizens. In addition, a private health insurance is highly recommended.

UNIVERSITY CHAPLAIN

University Chaplain offers services to Sibelius Academy staff and students. Conversations with him are confidential and free of charge.

With the University Chaplain you can talk about anything between heaven and earth: joy, longing, sorrow or happiness as well as everyday life. You can also ask about different

spiritual activities and support in Helsinki. Reception times and places, as well as contact details can be found from the intranet Artsi.

PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELLOR

The Sibelius Academy also offers the services of a psychologist – discussions are also confidential and free of charge.

With our psychologist, you can for example discuss your goals and choices in your studies or issues like coping with your workload. You do not need to have a considerable crisis; a need to speak to someone is enough. Please see more information and the contact details from intranet Artsi.

7. ARRIVING IN FINLAND

ARRIVAL

Most of the international flights arrive at the Helsinki - Vantaa airport. You can make your way into the city centre by train, taxi, Finnair City Bus or local bus.

To see the train and bus schedules, see the journey planner at www.reittiopas.fi/en/ or use Google Maps.

8. TRANSPORTATION AND TRAVELLING

LOCAL TRAFFIC

Helsinki City Transport

Helsinki has an efficient network of buses, trams, local trains and metro as well as a ferry to Suomenlinna Island. Tickets are valid for any form of local transport within Helsinki. Single tickets can be bought on buses, R-kiosks or from ticket machines.

Cycling is a very practical way of getting around in Helsinki; therefore, the **City bikes** - and even scooters - are a nice addition to the public transportation system.

Personal Travel Cards and tourist cards are available at the City Transport offices.

Both degree and exchange students under 30 years old are entitled to the student discount (except doctoral students). Exchange students will need to bring a form to the Transport Office to prove that they are enrolled as university students. This form is available during orientation and later at the International Relations Office. Degree students will get the student discount after completing the municipal registration.

The Travel Card itself costs approximately 5 €. Both a **validity period** (i.e. any period of 14-366 days) and **cash value** (i.e. 5–400 €) can be loaded onto the card. The student discount price is -50% of the normal cost. Travel cards can also be loaded at R-kiosks marked with the HSL or HKL logo.

The Transport Office Service Points are located at Rautatientori metro station and Itäkeskus Metro Station. More information at www.hsl.fi/en

TRAVELLING IN FINLAND

Finland has an efficient system of long-distance transportation. Bus and train routes cover virtually all of the country. The Student Union membership card (or the VR and Matkahuolto joint student card) gives a 50 % discount on trains and long-distance buses in Finland.

For information on long-distance buses, please see the website of Matkahuolto: www.matkahuolto.fi/en and Onnibus: www.onnibus.com/home

For information on train traffic please see the website of VR Group (Finnish Railways): www.vr.fi/en

Tourist offices in Helsinki

Visit Helsinki Tourist Office

www.visithelsinki.fi/en

Address: Central Railway Station (Kaivokatu 1)

Information Center at the airport

Travelling to the neighbouring countries

Once you are in Helsinki, take the opportunity to visit some of the many fascinating places nearby, for example Tallinn (Estonia) and Stockholm (Sweden). A number of shipping companies operate between Finland, Estonia and Sweden.

TALLINN, ESTONIA

There are several ferry companies operating between Helsinki and Tallinn. There are different kinds of boats; some faster, some slower, with departures virtually throughout the day. The fast catamarans do not run in strong wind, but they usually run as scheduled during the summer. Check in advance whether you will need a visa in order to enter Estonia.

- Tallink/Silja Line: www.tallinksilja.com
- Eckerö Line: www.eckeroline.fi
- Viking Line: www.vikingline.fi
- Linda Line: www.lindaline.fi

STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

There are departures to Stockholm from Helsinki and Turku every day. It is a bit quicker and cheaper to go from Turku but you do have to take a train or a bus there first.

- Silja Line: www.tallinksilja.fi
- Viking Line: www.vikingline.fi

RUSSIA

There are trains daily to St Petersburg, Moscow and Vyborg. For more information, please see the VR website: www.vr.fi/en/

St Petersburg is Russia's second largest city after Moscow with almost 5 million inhabitants. St Petersburg is a major European cultural center, and also an important Russian port on the Baltic Sea. Only few hours from Helsinki: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Petersburg

Visa-free cruises to St. Petersburg are becoming ever more popular. Travel agencies can provide you with sea voyages, cruises and complete cruise packages with accommodation in St. Petersburg. stpeterline.com/

9. GENERAL PRACTICAL INFORMATION

GENERAL EMERGENCY NUMBER: 112

CURRENCY AND BANKS (PANKKI)

Finland is a member of the European Monetary Union. The currency is **Euro** (1€ = 100 cents).

The banks are generally open between 9.15 and 16.15 Monday through Friday. International credit cards (VISA, Access, MasterCard, Eurocard, Diners Club, and American Express) are accepted in most places throughout Finland.

Money can be exchanged at any bank during bank hours. *Forex* exchange office is located both at the Central Railway Station and in Esplanade Park. If you arrive late in the day or during the weekend, it is best to exchange money at the airport.

You can also withdraw cash with major credit cards from the numerous ATM machines (OTTO) around town. The instructions are also in English.

In order to open a bank account you need a passport, Sibelius Academy acceptance letter, residence permit and preferably a recommendation from your bank where you have your account in your country of origin.

ELECTRICITY

Electricity in Finland follows the continental 220-volt, 50-cycle standard with a European two-pin plug. Travel store electric converters may be suitable for small appliances, but are not adequate for larger appliances or long-term use.

PHARMACIES (APTEEKKI)

Pharmaceutical products and medicine are sold in shops called *Apteekki*. Prescriptions take about 10 minutes to be handled. Non-prescription medicines are also available from pharmacies.

- The University Pharmacy (Yliopiston Apteekki) at Mannerheimintie 96 is open 24 hours a day.

MOBILE PHONE

It is possible to obtain a prepaid phone card in Finland through operators such as Elisa, Sonera and DNA. Starting packages are available through outlets such as R-Kioski. Simply buy a package, install the included SIM card in your mobile phone, key in the PIN and PUK codes provided and you can start making calls. Your new phone number is included with the package. You will be alerted when your airtime is running out and then you just "recharge" the subscription with a voucher from a prepaid dealer. You can also reload airtime from the Internet.

INTERNET

There is a free wifi-connection in all public libraries and many cafes. At the University's premises, you can use uniarts wifi with your user account.

If you have a data package in your telephone plan, you can use it as a hotspot for your other devices. If you want to have a more efficient connection for example at home, you can inquire a broadband or a USB modem from any of the phone operators.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

- Independence Day December 6
- Christmas Eve December 24
- Christmas Day December 25
- Boxing Day December 26

- New Year's Day January 1
- Epiphany January 6
- Good Friday * In March/April
- Easter Monday * In March/April
- Vappu (Walpurgis) May 1
- Ascension Day * In May
- Midsummer Day * In June

* The date varies annually

On the day preceding some holidays the offices and shops may close early (e.g. Maundy Thursday before Easter, the eve before May Day, Midsummer Eve and Christmas Eve).

SHOPS

If you arrive in Helsinki late at night, it is best to get what you need for breakfast at the airport. There is a well-stocked Alepa supermarket at the airport in Terminal 2, open 24h a day, 365 days of the year. Otherwise in Helsinki:

- Local grocery shops are usually open between 7.00-21.00/23.00 Monday to Friday, 9.00-18.00 on Saturdays and 12.00-21.00/23.00 on Sundays. Smaller stores stay open even longer.

DRINKING AND SMOKING

The age limit for drinking alcoholic beverages is 18 years in Finland. Mild alcoholic drinks (beer, cider) can be bought in grocery shops, wine and all strong alcoholic drinks are only sold in *Alko*, the Finnish state retail monopoly. You must be 20 before you can buy strong alcoholic beverages (over 22 % alcohol) from Alko.

Smoking is forbidden in public places such as university buildings, offices, shops, buses, trains, cinemas etc. Smoking is forbidden also in pubs and restaurants, unless there is a separate room reserved for smokers.

TIPPING

Tipping is not a customary practice in Finland, so you do not need to worry about it. However, if you wish to leave a tip, it will most certainly be welcomed.

TAXIS

Taxis can be ordered by phone from the Helsinki Taxi centre. You can also take a taxi at a taxi station, or flag one down in the street. All taxis display a yellow sign marked TAXI or TAKSI: when it is lit, the taxi is free.

Fares are quite expensive. The fare is based on distance travelled, as indicated by the meter. On top of the basic fare and the distance fare there is a small extra charge during the evening and at night. In addition to this you need to pay an extra fee for large objects and advance booking.

As the regulation for **taxi** traffic has been liberated lately in Finland, it is a good idea to check the price before the ride. There are also various applications to use, for example Yango and Uber. Beware of any illegal taxis!

LIBRARIES (KIRJASTO)

Finland is known for its comprehensive library network and quality of library services. No fee is charged for either borrowing or the use of library collections at the library. A decent selection of foreign language books is available. Some library branches have "swap" shelves, where visitors can exchange their own used books, including foreign language books, for others. Magazines, DVDs and CDs can also be borrowed. Internet is available at all libraries free of charge.

You can obtain a library card and borrowing rights from any library by presenting a photo-ID. Read more on Helsinki Metropolitan Area Libraries' website: www.helmet.fi/en-US/Info

MOVIES, TELEVISION, THEATRE, OPERA AND CONCERTS

Movies and television shows always have the original audio language with Finnish and/or Swedish subtitles. In Finland, only children's movies and TV shows are dubbed.

Most of the tickets to cultural events are sold through two chains or at the box offices at the institutions organising the events. The two chains are:

Lippupiste, www.lippupiste.fi
Ticketmaster, www.ticketmaster.fi

Some movie theatres in Helsinki:

www.finnkino.fi
cinamonkino.com
cinemaorion.fi
www.kinoengel.fi
kinoregina.fi
www.rivierakallio.fi

THE SIBELIUS ACADEMY CONCERT SERIES

Sibelius Academy arranges a concert series that includes debuts, orchestra and choir concerts as well as concerts given by teachers or students and concerts arranged in cooperation with cultural establishments outside the Sibelius Academy (art galleries, museums etc.). Altogether, Sibelius Academy produces more than 450 concerts annually!

A brochure giving details of the concerts is published in the beginning of each semester and it is available in each Academy building. The students of the Sibelius Academy are entitled to free admission to most of these concerts by showing their student card or certificate of attendance at the box office. You are welcome to use this opportunity as often as you like.

USEFUL LINKS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information on Finland and Helsinki, have a look at the following web sites:

thisisFINLAND (of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs)
finland.fi

City of Helsinki
www.hel.fi/en

Study in Finland
studyinfinland.fi

Visit Finland
www.visitfinland.com

Learn Finnish language online:
tasteoffinnish.fi
extreme-finnish.teachable.com