



**GENEVA  
GRADUATE  
INSTITUTE**

# EXCHANGE SEMESTER AT THE GENEVA GRADUATE INSTITUTE

Photo credit: Geneva Graduate Institute

## The Institute at a Glance

Located in the heart of International Geneva, the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies is a centre of academic excellence and policy dialogue, dedicated to advancing knowledge and understanding of global affairs and development studies.

The Institute features:

- More than 1000 Master's and Phd students;
- 100+ nationalities;
- 85 professors from 24 different countries;
- English as the language of instruction;
- French language courses.

## Student Environment

### STUDENT LIFE

At the Geneva Graduate Institute, students from over 100 countries create a vibrant, cosmopolitan community. Beyond the classroom, they can join student initiatives and clubs — from the Environmental Committee and Peacebuilding Initiative to the Queer International Student Assembly, Junior Diplomat Initiative, and much more. These initiatives give students the chance to organise events, lead projects, and make an impact, while connecting with peers and engaging with the wider community.

### STUDENT SERVICES

A dedicated team is here to support students throughout their academic journey. From admissions and programme administration to international mobility, wellbeing, and career services, Student Services provides guidance at every stage of their experience. Exchange students benefit from full access to these services, ensuring the same level of support as the entire student community.

## Academic Context

### COURSE OFFERINGS & ENROLMENT

Each academic department at the Institute selects the courses that exchange students are eligible to take. In general, elective courses are available, while compulsory courses, research methods courses, and certain workshops are reserved for degree-seeking students. Exchange students are not tied to a specific department, giving them the flexibility to choose up to five courses across different disciplines. Course registration is subject to availability and can be adjusted during the first week of classes to help students build the best possible schedule.

### WORKLOAD & ECTS

The Geneva Graduate Institute follows the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), in which one credit corresponds to approximately 25–30 hours of student workload. Most full-semester courses, typically meeting once a week, carry 6 ECTS, while half-semester courses or intensive workshops (three full days) are worth 3 ECTS. Exchange students generally complete 30 ECTS per semester, equivalent to around five courses, and are encouraged to plan their academic workload in close consultation with their home institution advisors. In Switzerland, academic performance is graded on a 1 to 6 scale, with 4 representing the minimum passing grade.

### LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

We expect all students to document a proficiency level that corresponds to the CEFR C1 or higher. The Graduate Institute has a bilingual policy that allows students to express themselves in class, and submit written work, in either English or French, regardless of the language through which the course is taught. The majority of classes at the Institute, however, are taught in English. Knowledge of French is not required.

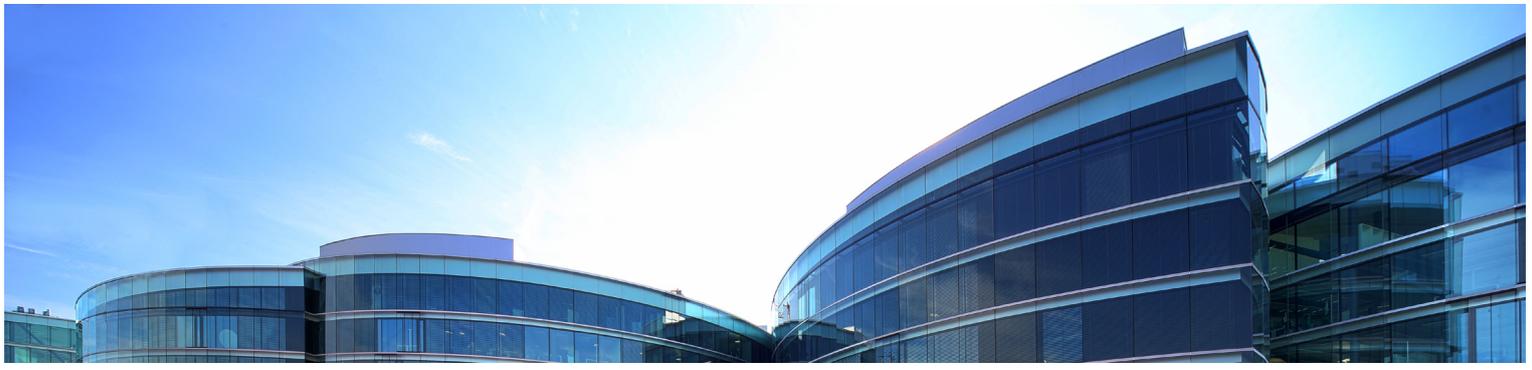


Photo credit: Geneva Graduate Institute

## Application Procedure

**Nomination Deadlines:** Autumn Semester: 15 March / Spring Semester: 15 October

**Application Deadlines:** Autumn Semester: 1 April / Spring Semester: 1 November

Only candidates nominated by the Institute's academic partners are considered. Nominations should be communicated two weeks prior to the application deadline. Nominees will be contacted directly and given access to the online application form. In addition, applicants are required to send their supporting documents by email to [exchanges@graduateinstitute.ch](mailto:exchanges@graduateinstitute.ch).

## Academic Calendar

**Autumn Semester:** Classes start on Monday 14 September 2026 and end on Friday 18 December 2026.

**Spring Semester:** Classes start on Monday 22 February 2027 and end on Friday 28 May 2027

## Practical Information

### STUDENT VISA

Most non-EU citizens need a visa to enter and study in Switzerland. Visa applications must be submitted online (not at the local Swiss embassy) after receiving your confirmation of admission. Please note that processing can take up to three months, so it is important to apply as early as possible. In addition, all non-Swiss students must obtain a residence permit upon arrival in Geneva. Residence permits are issued by the Office Cantonal de la Population et des Migrations (OCPM).

### HOUSING

Exchange students have the option to live in one of the Institute's two student residences, Grand Morillon and De Picciotto, which offer a variety of accommodations, including studios, one-bedroom apartments, and shared flats. It is also possible to apply for housing in University of Geneva residences. To ensure a smooth arrival in Geneva, we strongly recommend securing housing before applying for a visa.

### LIVING EXPENSES

A budget of 1,800–2,000 CHF per month is generally sufficient for a well-balanced student lifestyle in Geneva, including housing, food, health insurance, transportation, and everyday expenses. To support financial planning, the Geneva Graduate Institute's Student Association (GISA) provides a monthly student budget estimate to give an overview of typical living costs. Please note that exchange students do not pay tuition fees to the Graduate Institute.

### HEALTH INSURANCE

Health insurance is mandatory in Switzerland, and proof of coverage must be provided within three months of arrival. EU/EEA students may be exempt, while non-EU/EEA students can choose from affordable student plans. Insurance is arranged directly with the provider, giving you flexibility to pick the coverage that works best for you.



Scan to see our current course catalogue

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