

# Vademecum for International PhD students

UNIVERSITÀ MILANO-BICOCCA

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# Being a PhD student at Milano-Bicocca

This document is a guide for international PhD students to find their way at the University Milano-Bicocca and in Milano itself. It also aims at helping them to deal with Italian bureaucracy. Some of the bureaucracy will be easy. While other parts might be impossible to do. But you will experience it yourself. The guide is built on the previous experience of PhD students who managed to complete the bureaucracy. Whenever the guide is incomplete previous PhD students did not manage to get it done, so it is the duty of the **University Milano-Bicocca** to help with these tasks. However, often the only help you will get from the university is a link to yesmilano (<https://www.yesmilano.it/en/work/getting-started-guide>). Their *Getting Started Guide* contains a lot of useful information and covers many of the topics in more detail that also we discuss here.

## 1 Bureaucracy

Dealing with Italian bureaucracy is a pain and the best advice is to avoid it whenever possible. However, there are certain things one has to do as an international PhD student, like getting a codice fiscale (Italian tax number). Other things can be avoided, like getting an Italian bank account. We will now discuss each subject individually.

### 1.1 Codice Fiscale

The very first thing you need to do when arriving in Italy is to ask for a *codice fiscale* (Italian fiscal code/tax code). You will need it for almost everything (renting a house, opening a bank account, subscribing to an internet/phone provider, health security...). Luckily, it is also the only thing in Italian bureaucracy that is easy to achieve. When applying for the PhD you already had to fill in a codice fiscale. This was possible since the codice fiscale is generated automatically according to your name, place of birth, date of birth, etc. So, the codice fiscale that you will receive will be the one you used during your application. However, it needs to become official, i.e. you need a paper from the *agenzia delle entrate* (Italian tax office). You can either go to one of the offices and ask in person or try to ask for it via Email.

When going to the office in person, find the office that is closest to you and try to be there early to avoid queuing. First, fill in the form in the first queue as you enter, get a ticket, and then wait for your turn to enter the offices. Concerning paperwork, you only need a valid ID. Contrary to Italian-born people you will probably not get an ID card for doing that. They will just give you a piece of paper. But make a lot of copies of it, you will need them for all the following paperwork.

During COVID, it became possible to ask for the codice fiscale via Email. Fill out the application form that can be found here: [https://conssanfrancisco.esteri.it/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/codice\\_fiscale\\_application\\_form\\_aa4-8\\_-\\_inglese.pdf](https://conssanfrancisco.esteri.it/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/codice_fiscale_application_form_aa4-8_-_inglese.pdf). Send the application form together with a copy of a valid ID (passport) to the email address of one of the tax offices in Milano and explain that you are a PhD student in Bicocca. After a few days, you should receive your codice fiscale, which is just a piece of paper with your data and the codice fiscale on it. If the possibility of asking for the codice fiscale via Email does not exist anymore, they will let you know. I would advise you to first try via Email and only go to the office in person if they tell you that you need to come in person.

### 1.2 The problem of PhD students: not a student, not a worker

After receiving the codice fiscale the problems with Italian bureaucracy start. And one of the main reasons is the legal status of PhD students in Italy, because PhD students do not count as students. However, they also do not count as workers, since we do not get a working contract. Somehow, the Italian legislation just forgot about us. The consequences are that every step in the bureaucracy becomes particularly hard or almost impossible to do. Furthermore, we do not get discounts normal students get (see Sec. 6.6). We will now discuss some of the most important parts of bureaucracy you should do (but probably won't manage to do due to Italian bureaucracy).

### 1.3 Residence Permit: Difference EU citizens vs non-EU citizens

There is a difference between being an EU citizen and being from outside the EU concerning the residence permit and being allowed to stay in Italy. If you are an EU citizen things are slightly easier for you, since you are allowed to stay in Italy and do not need a residence permit. All you need to do is to register at the commune. However, even that can be difficult to impossible to achieve (see Sec. 1.4).

If you are from outside the EU you need a residence permit. For that, you need to go to the post office to pick up the application kit. To submit the residence permit you need a copy of your passport, a copy of your codice fiscale, and a housing declaration. A more detailed explanation on all the things you need can be found at yesmilano: <https://www.yesmilano.it/en/work/getting-started-guide/residence-permit>.

## 1.4 Residency

In Italy there is a difference between *residenza* (residency) and *domicilio*. For having a domicilio you do not need to do any special bureaucracy. It is simply the place where you live and receive your mail. Residenza on the other side requires you to register with the commune at the anagrafe office. To get residenza you need a valid rental contract for your house/flat/room (student residences do not count and cannot be used for the residenza) and a valid health insurance in Italy. In theory as a PhD student you can get a cheap health insurance (see Sec. 1.6). However, in practice it is almost impossible to get it. This leaves you with the only possibility to get a private health insurance (which can be really expensive). More information on health insurance you can find in Sec. 1.6. A more detailed explanation on how to get residency in Italy can be found on the website of yesmilano: <https://www.yesmilano.it/en/study/how-to/take-residence-milano-students>.

## 1.5 Bank Account

To receive your PhD scholarship you need a bank account. This bank account does not need to be an Italian bank account, it can also be a bank account from any other EU country. Since bureaucracy in Italy is a nightmare it is always good to avoid bureaucracy when possible. Therefore, if you already have a bank account in another EU country, you can simply use that bank account. However, there are certain services for which you need an Italian bank account, e.g. unemployment money after your contract finishes (see Sec. 1.10). In case you want to open an Italian bank account, there is the possibility to use your university badge as your bank card (see Sec. 2.2). You can find the information on how to activate the bank functions on your badge here: <https://en.unimib.it/services/utilities/service-desk/university-badge>.

## 1.6 Health Care and Tessera Sanitaria

The *tessera sanitaria* is the health insurance card that you need whenever you access some kind of health care service (going to the doctor, getting vaccines, buying medicine in the pharmacy). In theory, PhD students can get relatively cheap health insurance for about 150€ per year. However, in practice it is difficult to actually get this health insurance in Italy (many international PhD students give up after trying several months to get this health insurance without succeeding). To get the national health insurance you need residency (see Sec. 1.4) in Italy. But to get residency you need health insurance. In that way, you are trapped in an infinite loop that you can only break by buying private health insurance (which is expensive). If you manage to get a tessera sanitaria you will have to choose a family doctor. There are family doctors that speak English and it is advised to pick such a family doctor (unless you speak Italian really well).

## 1.7 Accessing health services without tessera sanitaria

Even without a tessera sanitaria, you will need to access health care from time to time. Some things you can access without a tessera sanitaria (like vaccines). Others you can access, but it is unclear whether you need to pay for it or not. If you are an EU citizen, your health insurance from your home country should be fine, at least for the moment, but it is still recommended to get Italian health insurance although it might be difficult to obtain it.

As soon as you have a *codice fiscale* (see Sec. 1.1) it is possible to get vaccines, e.g. a flu shot or the covid vaccine. All you have to do is to go to a pharmacy and make an appointment for the vaccine. For example, *Farmacia Zanotta* in Via Luigi Pulci 19 already know how to do the bureaucracy when you don't have a tessera sanitaria (see Sec. 1.6) and want to sign up for the vaccine with your codice fiscale.

There might be a need for proper medical assistance in case of an emergency. In this case, you can go to any hospital and seek help. However, in the end, you will receive a bill for the service. Usually, they say "Don't worry" and send you away without making you pay the bill. However, I would not count on that and it is in general good to have health insurance. Long story short, you should get health insurance. However, it might be really difficult to actually get it. Especially, since there is basically no help from the university to get all the bureaucracy done.

## 1.8 Phone/Internet

As soon as you arrive in Italy you should get an Italian phone number. The main mobile phone companies in Italy are:

- Wind-Tre
- Vodafone
- Tim
- Fastweb

They are also internet providers. In Italy, calls to mobile phones of the same company as the one you use are usually free. To get a phone number you need your codice fiscale and a document (passport).

## 1.9 INPS and Pension

A small part of your PhD stipend goes to the INPS (L'Istituto nazionale della previdenza sociale) for your pension and as insurance for unemployment. To have access to the money the university pays to INPS you need to sign up for the *gestione separata*. You need to do that online at <https://www.inps.it>. To sign up you need access to INPS. The only way to get access for international students is via a PIN. You can request it online. One half of your PIN you will receive via email. The other half will be sent to your home address. This can take several weeks. As soon as you have both parts of the PIN you can access INPS and sign up for the *gestione separata*.

Signing up for the *gestione separata* is relatively straight forward. Use the search field to type in *gestione separata* and select *Iscrizione dei lavoratori parasubordinati alla Gestione Separata*. By clicking on *Utilizza il servizio* you can start the process of signing up for the *gestione separata*. If you need help it is best to ask an Italian native speaker at your department. At the end of the process, download the confirmation that you enrolled for the *gestione separata*, since you will need it for the application for unemployment money at the end of your PhD (see Sec. 1.10).

## 1.10 Unemployment

After your PhD you can apply for unemployment money to help you bridge the time until you find either a postdoc or work in the private sector. You can apply for the *disoccupazione* (unemployment) via the INPS website: <https://www.inps.it/>. You need to log in with your personal account (see Sec. 1.9 for details on how to get an account) and apply online. When logged into your account type in *dis-coll* in the search bar and select *DIS-COLL: indennità mensile di disoccupazione*. You can then click on *Utilizza il servizio* to start the application procedure. It is recommended to find yourself an Italian native speaker who can help you fill out the application form. Most documents needed for the application you should already have or be able to download them from *u-web*, like your payslips. The only document missing is a document that shows how long the PhD did last. For that you need to write to [dottorati@unimib.it](mailto:dottorati@unimib.it) and ask for *una copia dichiarazione Università attestante il periodo di dottorato*. They will then forward your request to the responsible office and after a few days you should receive a PDF via email.

As a non-Italian, you will need to present yourself at the *Centro per l'Impiego* (job center) which you had to name during the application process within two weeks. You need to go there in person and you need to be there early (before 8:00) since only a limited number of people without an appointment are allowed to enter each day. After waiting for an hour (until 9:00) when they start to let people in, you will then wait probably until noon for your appointment.

In case you successfully manage to submit your request for unemployment money and the request gets approved you will receive about 70% of your last income each month (which should be around 900€ unless the PhD stipend gets increased at some point). Only if you have an Italian bank account you can receive the unemployment money via a bank transfer. If you don't have an Italian bank account, they will send you the money via Mail, i.e. you need to go to the post office every month to pick up the money in cash.

## 2 Bureaucracy at the University

Apart from the bureaucracy with the Italian state, there is also bureaucracy at the university. This includes reimbursement for conferences, calculation of the ISEE, and Italian language classes. Luckily, this bureaucracy is a bit easier than the one with the Italian state and is usually solvable. Below we discuss the most important things.

## 2.1 Reimbursement

As PhD students one of the most important parts of our work is going to conferences to present our research results. Furthermore, we can also attend summer/winter schools and workshops. Since this counts as work, we have a certain budget that can be used for it. Furthermore, this budget can also be used to buy equipment (computers, screens, etc). The budget available for conferences, workshops, summer schools, and equipment varies and depends on your PhD cycle. It is a few thousand Euros (~ 3000 Euro) and it usually becomes more for newer PhD cycles. If you are lucky and you are hired on an ERC or PRIN project or your supervisor has some extra money, there is even more money you can use for conferences etc. However, for the ERC and PRIN money, if available, you need to ask your supervisor for permission, while the money allocated to you for travel, conferences and equipment you can use as you wish without asking your supervisor for permission. This is important in case your relation to your supervisor is not the best (see e.g. Sec. 4). We will now explain how buying equipment and reimbursement for conferences, workshops, and schools work.

**Buying equipment:** To buy equipment you need to find the responsible secretary of your department. Then you write an Email to the secretary saying what kind of equipment you would like to have (laptop, screen for your desk etc). The secretary can then place the order and a few weeks later it should arrive.

**Conferences, Workshops, Schools:** If you are going to a conference, workshop, or summer/winter school this can be paid from your budget for travel/equipment. The usual way is that you make the bookings for your flights/train/bus, hotel and pay the conference fee. After the conference, you can then ask for reimbursement of all the expenses including food. To claim the reimbursement after your trip it is important to keep all the receipts, especially the ones for food. Without receipts, there is no reimbursement. There is also the possibility that the secretary is paying upfront for certain expenses directly from your budget, e.g. for the conference fee if the fee is too high to pay it out of your pocket. If you want to do that you need to contact the secretary from your department well in advance and ask for the payment upfront. In that case you do not need to include that in your reimbursement.

Before the conference/workshop/school, you need to go to <https://unimib.u-web.cineca.it/> and open a mission. There you click on *Le mie missioni* and then on *New Claim* on the top left. Then you need to enter the location and the duration of your trip. After that, you are asked to provide information on the title, type of request, head of project, and many more things. An example on how to fill out the request for a mission on u-web can be found in Fig. 1. Remember that you have to change the *Head of project*, *Project*, *Structure Concerned* and *Paying Structure* to fit your department. *Head of Project* is the responsible person for your PhD school. At the end, you need to give an estimate of the expenses (i.e. add together transportation costs, hotel, and conference fees and add some money for the food). As soon as you return from your conference trip you need to ask for reimbursement. Although you do not have to ask for the reimbursement immediately, it is advised to do it straight away because it can take several months until you receive the money. So, the earlier you ask for the money the earlier you will receive it.

To ask for reimbursement after the conference the first step is to check whether your mission has already been approved. In a perfect world, the mission should be approved when you return from your conference or school. However, there are departments where the *Head of the project*, i.e. the head of the PhD school, who has to approve the mission is not doing it in time. In this case, the best thing is to either send regular Email reminders or to directly track down the head of the project in his/her office to remind them that they should approve your project.

As soon as the mission is approved you can start the reimbursement process. You need to go again on *u-web* to your mission and add all your expenses together with a copy of your receipts. When this is done you need to print the request for reimbursement and bring it together with all the original receipts to the responsible person for reimbursement in your department. After a couple of weeks (6 to 12 weeks usually) you will receive your money.

## 2.2 Badge

Your university badge will be sent to you in the beginning via mail. You can use it as your bank card, if you wish to open the account (see Sec. 1.5). It gives you access to the parking lots if you should have a car and bring it to Milano. Furthermore, you can ask for access to the university building outside the opening hours (e.g. if you need to access a laboratory or just want to work really late). And, if you should have a disability, you can also ask to access special elevators which are reserved for employees. To access the university outside opening hours and to get access to employee elevators you have to ask for it online. More information about the badge can be found here: <https://en.unimib.it/services/utilities/service-desk/university-badge>.



## 2.3 ISEE

The ISEE (l'Indicatore della Situazione Economica Equivalente - Equivalent Economic Situation Indicator) is a tool used to decide whether one has access to certain bonuses and social benefits (e.g. cheap annual ticket for ATM). Furthermore, it also decides how much we have to pay in enrolment fees each year at university. Therefore, each year we have to hand in our ISEE to the University (no worries, you will get regular Email reminders about it).

There are two versions of the ISEE, the official one and the one calculated by the university. The official ISEE has to be obtained in a CAF (centri di assistenza fiscale - fiscal assistance center) and is the prerequisite to get for example the reduced annual ATM ticket. However, to get the official ISEE at a CAF you need to have *residenza* (residency) in Italy which might be difficult to obtain (see Sec. 1.4). Since the University still needs your ISEE to assess how much you have to pay in enrolment fees, there is also the possibility to have the ISEE calculated by the University itself. For that you simply send several documents via Email to: **segr.studenti.tasse@unimib.it**. The guide for calculating the ISEE can be found here: [https://www.unimib.it/sites/default/files/2023-06/Guida%20ISEE%2023\\_24%20eng.pdf](https://www.unimib.it/sites/default/files/2023-06/Guida%20ISEE%2023_24%20eng.pdf). The important part for international students can be found in Appendix 2. And in case something is not clear, one can always directly write to the responsible office, i.e. to **segr.studenti.tasse@unimib.it**

Some of the documents that are required by the university to calculate the ISEE do not exist in other countries, eg. a document about not owning property, documents of not having children, etc. In this case, you will send the documents you were able to acquire together with the filled-out ISEE application form ([https://www.unimib.it/sites/default/files/2023-06/modulo\\_richiesta\\_calcolo\\_isee\\_residenti\\_allestero\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.unimib.it/sites/default/files/2023-06/modulo_richiesta_calcolo_isee_residenti_allestero_ENG.pdf)) and a copy of your passport to **segr.studenti.tasse@unimib.it** where in the Email you explain which documents do not exist in your country. You also need to make a statement about whether you own any property in Italy. If you do not own any property in Italy, you simply include in your Email the following statement: "I do not own any property or moveable assets in Italy and I also did not earn any income in Italy in 2020" (you need to replace the year with the year that is asked for in the ISEE application).

## 2.4 Italian Language Classes

One of the most important things for your life in Italy is to learn Italian. It not only helps when dealing with bureaucracy but also makes life in Italy more fun. Also, if you should decide to stay in Italy after your PhD for work, knowing Italian is key to getting a job. Luckily, the university is offering free Italian language classes. They usually start in November and go until the end of January for the first semester and then again from the beginning of March until the middle of May. You should receive an Email from the language department in September/October to sign up for the classes. In case you do not receive any Email write directly to their office and ask for information on the Italian classes. Their Email is: **segreteria.lingue@unimib.it**. Since the rules for Italian classes and the deadlines for signing up change every year, it might be a good idea to just write to the language office as soon as possible to ask for information on the Italian classes.

## 2.5 Help and Information on bureaucracy

For information about the administrative procedures of the PhD you can contact the *Doctoral School Department*. Their Email is: **dottorati@unimib.it**. Alternatively you can also always contact your PhD representatives. They are elected every year and you will receive an Email with the information about who your current representatives are together with their contact information after each election.

## 3 ADI (associazione dottorandi e dottori di ricerca in Italia)

ADI (associazione dottorandi e dottori di ricerca in Italia - association for PhDs in Italy) is the association that represents and protects PhD students in Italy. So, in a way, it is like a trade union for PhD researchers. They can provide help with bureaucracy, give you help and advice when you have problems with your supervisor, in cases of harassment, or when you have problems with the university. That is, whenever you have a problem connected to your PhD or the Italian bureaucracy, you can ask them for help and advice (also legal advice). As with every trade union, it is always good to become a member to support the work, but it is not necessary to receive help (and if so, they will let you know). The website of ADI is: <https://dottorato.it/>. To contact the branch of ADI responsible for Milano use this Email: **milano@dottorato.it**. They will then put you in contact with the person responsible for Milano-Bicocca.

## 4 Problems with supervisors, harassment, etc

Doing a PhD is work and your workplace is the university. And as with every workplace there also might be problems like harassment or mobbing by your peers. Furthermore, you might encounter problems with your supervisor, e.g. that he/she is not supervising, or that he/she is even a source of harassment or mobbing. In all these cases you should speak with someone and try to get help. Bicocca has an official person (*consigliera di fiducia*) to which you can address cases of harassment or mobbing. You will receive regular Emails with the dates when you can speak with the responsible person. However, sometimes the problem might be more urgent. In this case, if you have colleagues or peers whom you trust, talk to them as a first step. Next, you should also talk to either your PhD representatives (see Sec. 2.5), to the representatives from ADI (see Sec. 3) or to the representative for all the PhD students of our Department in the committee for inclusion and gender themes support (see Sec. ??). Or all of them.

If you have problems with your supervisor you can also always talk to your PhD representatives or the representatives from ADI. However, for problems with your supervisor, there is also another official person you can turn to, namely your *tutor*. At the beginning of your PhD you need to name a supervisor and a tutor. These can be the same person, but it is advised to choose a different person from your supervisor as your tutor. In theory, the tutor should be like a second supervisor who can step in, in case of problems with your supervisor. Whether the tutor you choose actually fulfills this role (or is willing to fulfill this role) depends on the department you are in and the tutor you choose.

### 4.1 Commission for Inclusiveness and Gender Issues

The University of Milano-Bicocca and the Physics Department "G. Occhialini" promote policies to protect the well-being of people who work and study there, and actions aimed at contrasting any form of discrimination, mobbing, abuse, harassment, and violence.

In the Physics Department a "*Commission for Inclusiveness and Gender Issues*" has been appointed, which is responsible for organizing initiatives aimed at fostering interest in Physics and Sciences among girls in general, initiatives in favor of equal opportunities and against any form of discrimination, while offering a safe space for listening.

One PhD student is elected to be part of this Commission and usually you will be informed on who you can refer to. In case it does not happen, or in order to find more information on this Commission, you can always look up in the University website or refer to the PhD representatives.

## 5 Housing

Housing in Milano is expensive. Luckily, the university offers Student residences for students from far away. Information on how to apply for this housing can be found here: <https://en.unimib.it/education/postgraduates/doctoral-research-phd-programmes/during-your-phd/how>. You can also write to [servizi.dsu@unimib.it](mailto:servizi.dsu@unimib.it) or [residenze.ristorazione@unimib.it](mailto:residenze.ristorazione@unimib.it) for more information on the possibility of housing in the university residences. More information on student residences can also be found here: <https://en.unimib.it/services/offices-and-facilities/bicocca-campus-opportunities-and-facilities/dining-and-accomodation/accomodation>. In case you want to live in your own flat or shared house in the city the best websites to look for houses and shared flats are <https://www.bakeca.it/> and <https://www.subito.it/>.

## 6 Public Transport

Milano is well-connected with public transport and it usually also works quite reliably. This means public transport is a good choice for coming to university or doing trips on the weekend. Below is the most important information on public transport, tickets, and strikes.

### 6.1 ATM

ATM (Azienda Trasporti Milanese) is the public transport company in Milano (<https://www.atm.it/it/Pagine/default.aspx>). Single day tickets can be bought at kiosks, at the tabaccheria, or at the machines in metro stations. Alternatively, you can also use the official app. If you are using public transport on a daily basis it is recommended to get an abbonamento (monthly/half year/yearly ticket). For more information on the abbonamento see Sec. 6.5.



## 6.2 Trenord

Trenord is the public transport company that operates the regional trains in Lombardy. Tickets can be bought at the train station, online (<https://www.trenord.it/>) or via their app. Since it is part of *trenitalia* (see Sec. 6.3) one can also buy tickets through the *trenitalia* app.

## 6.3 Trenitalia

*Trenitalia* is the public transport company operating long-distance trains in Italy. Tickets can be bought at the train station, on their website (<https://www.trenitalia.com/>) or via their app. For students (also PhD students) from Bicocca there exists a 20% discount on all the *Trenitalia* tickets. For that one needs to have the app and register for the program. All the information can be found at the website <https://www.unimib.it/servizi/studenti-e-laureati/opportunita-e-facilities/convenzioni-studenti/convenzioni-comerciali-attive/trasporti/trenitalia-welfare-plus>. Furthermore, if traveling in a group of 3 or more people (e.g. when going to a conference or on a short holiday), *Trenitalia* offers another 20% discount on the tickets. For that, you need to buy the tickets online or via the app and if you buy the same ticket for three or more persons, the discount is automatically deducted from the price.

*Frecchia Rossa* is part of *Trenitalia* and operates the high-velocity trains. The private competitor of *Frecchia Rossa* is *Italo*. In general, transportation with trains in Italy work really well and it is the perfect mode of transportation to go to conferences or on short trips inside Italy.

## 6.4 Strikes

Strikes (*sciopero*) are a common thing in Italy and you will encounter them on a regular basis. Strikes need to be announced several days in advance and you will hear the announcement of the strike on the public transport. Also, the apps, website and Twitter accounts of ATM, Trenord and *Trenitalia* inform about upcoming strikes. And in case you do not check you will find out when waiting at the station.

For ATM, during a strike the service has to be guaranteed until 8:45 in the morning and from 15:00 to 18:00, i.e. it allows you to go to work and come back home even in case of a strike. Outside these times you might be lucky and the metro lines you need to take work. Or you might be unlucky and you need to walk.

## 6.5 Abbonamento

If you use public transport to commute to university it is advised to do an *abbonamento* (monthly, half-year, or yearly ticket), since this will be much cheaper than paying for every trip individually. Information on the different types of *abbonamenti* can be found on the website of ATM (<https://www.atm.it/it/ViaggiaConNoi/Abbonamenti/Pagine/Tipologie.aspx>). To make the *abbonamento* go to one of the many offices of ATM (e.g. at the central station). After that you can renew it every month at the machines in every metro station.

## 6.6 Discounts for PhD students

There are no discounts on the *abbonamento* for PhD students. While there are discounts for undergrad students, postdocs, and professors, there are no discounts for PhD students. This is mostly because of the legal status of PhD students, which is not really a student. But also not really a worker (see 1.2). They simply forgot about us.

## 6.7 Abbonamento annuale 50 euro

If your ISEE (see Sec. 2.3) is below 6000 you can get the annual ticket for the public transport in Milano for only 50€. For this reduced annual ticket you need to do the official ISEE at a CAF (see also Sec. 2.3) which requires *residenza* in Italy. Furthermore, you can only ask for this reduced ticket at one of the many CAFs. The documents you need for this ticket can be found at <https://www.atm.it/it/ViaggiaConNoi/Abbonamenti/Pagine/Tipologie.aspx> under the point *Abbonamento urbano annuale ridotto, in base al reddito*. Even if you manage to obtain an official ISEE and have *residenza* in Italy you might not manage to get the reduced annual ticket. Some of the PhD students who did not manage to acquire all the necessary documents nevertheless managed to get this ticket, while others who had all the required documents did not. So, in a way it can also depend on the CAF you are going whether you manage to get the ticket or not. Therefore, it is at least worth a try (although it might be really frustrating dealing with the bureaucracy).

## 7 Culture and Sports

A PhD is hard and one also needs to rest and time off in which one can enjoy the beautiful parts of life. Luckily, Milano is one of the cultural centers of Italy and therefore offers a great variety of cultural events, from theater and opera, over museums and concerts, all the way to Serie A football games. Furthermore, Milano is perfectly located for outdoor sports like hiking or swimming. Below we give a short guide on some of the things one can do during one's free time.

### 7.1 Theater and Opera

The most famous theater in Milano is definitely *La Scala* (<https://www.teatroallascala.org/en/index.html>). It hosts Opera, Ballet and concerts of classical music. Tickets sell out fast and can cost up to several hundred euros. However, tickets for seats that do not offer a great view can be as cheap as only 20€. These seats are usually placed in front of columns. This is not a problem, since one can stand up to have an almost perfect view. Therefore, if you don't mind standing for two hours you can see amazing performances at *La Scala* for almost no money.

Other theaters are for example *Teatro Arcimboldi* right besides Bicocca (<https://www.teatroarcimboldi.it/>) hosting musicals, ballet and modern dance, *Piccolo Teatro* (<https://www.piccoloteatro.org/en?lang=es>) hosting classical theater plays, *Fabbrica del Vapore* (<https://www.fabbricadelvapore.org/>) hosting contemporary dance or *Teatro Franco Parenti* (<https://teatrofrancoparenti.it/>). Use the time in Milano to see as many shows as possible.

### 7.2 Museums

The many museums in Milano are the perfect thing to see when it is a rainy weekend. Luckily, there exists a special offer by the region of Lombardia which allows you to visit almost all museums in Lombardy with a single season ticket (*Abbonamento Musei Lombardia*). This lombardia card (<https://www.regione.lombardia.it/wps/portal/istituzionale/HP/DettaglioServizio/servizi-e-informazioni/Cittadini/Cultura/Musei-ed-ecomusei/abbonamento-musei-lombardia/abbonamento-musei-lombardia>) only costs about 40€, i.e. it is a really good deal. If you do not want to pay for museums, many museums have free access to parts of the exhibitions once every month (usually the first Sunday of the month, but it is better to double check).

There are some museums that are not included in the lombardia card but still worth a visit, like the *Mudec* (<https://www.mudec.it/en/>) or the roof of the duomo (strictly speaking not a museum, but definitely worth a visit since the view is amazing. Finally, Milano also hosts one of the most famous paintings by Leonardo da Vinci, i.e. *The Last Supper* or *Cenacolo* in Italian. Tickets for the *Cenacolo* are released every three months and sell out pretty fast. So, if you want to see the *Cenacolo* you need to plan and book several months in advance. On the official homepage of the *Cenacolo* (<https://cenacolovinciano.org/>) you can buy the tickets and find all the information when the next patch of tickets is released.

### 7.3 Concerts

Since Milano is one of the cultural centers of Italy, each year many international artists come to Milano on their tours for concerts. The biggest concerts usually also sell out pretty fast. Therefore, to get tickets, just follow your most favorite artists and buy the tickets as soon as the concerts are announced.

However, apart from the big names, Milano also has a vibrant music scene with many small concerts by very good, but not well-known artists. Among the locations are the various *Arci* (<https://arcimilano.it/>) in Milano and its surroundings. You can find all the *Arci* in the Milano area on this map: <https://arcimilano.it/i-circoli-di-milano-lodi-monza-e-brianza/>. To find out which concerts will be happening, simply go on the website of the different *Arci* and look at their schedule. Apart from concerts the different *Arci* also host poetry slams, stand-up comedy, literature events, and discussions on politics and art. Therefore, they are one of the most important cultural institutions in Italy and if you are interested in music and culture you definitely need to check them out. To enter the *Arci* you need a membership card (*tessera*), which is easy to obtain. The first time you go to one of the *Arci* you fill out a simple form, pay ca 10€, and get your card. The *tessera* has to be renewed each year.

*Circolo magnolia* (<https://www.circolomagnolia.it/>) and *Amelia* (<https://www.masadamilano.it/circolo-amelia/>) are two more institutions of cultural life in Milano which one has to know. They are not part of the *Arci* network, but work in a similar way, i.e. you need a *tessera* to get in. They also host concerts, but also parties, and electronic music. Other places with concerts and events are for example *BASE* (<https://base.milano.it/>) or *Bachelite CLab*. This list is not exhaustive and many more great venues for concerts exist in Milano.

## 7.4 Football

For every football fan, Milano is one of the best places to be, since with Inter Milano, AC Milano and Atalanta Bergamo there are several top Serie A teams in Milano or close by. Since football is a great part of Italian culture going to see at least one football match in the stadium should be on the todo list of each international student. Tickets can be fairly cheap starting at around 20€ if the game is against a smaller team. Tickets can usually be bought online at the websites of the clubs. In Italy, for security reasons, one has to give one's passport details and at the entrance the IDs are checked. Furthermore, there might be restrictions on whether you are allowed to go to a game based on where your residence is. In general, in Italy, you are not allowed to go to the neutral section of a stadium if your residence is in the same province (or country for international games) as the visiting team.

## 7.5 Hiking

Since Milano is close to the mountains, it is also a good place to go hiking. There are many hikes, easy ones as well as more advanced ones, that are accessible by public transport. They are all located in the mountains close to lake Como or Lago Maggiore and in summer the hikes can be combined with swimming (see Sec. 7.6). A good starting point to plan your hikes is the website: <https://www.komoot.com/>.

## 7.6 Swimming

In summer it can get fairly hot in Milano. Luckily, lake Como is not far away and one can go there to swim and spend the day in a more acceptable climate compared to Milano. There are several public beaches where it is allowed to go swimming in some of the smaller towns along the lake, for example in Mandello del Lario or in Colico. All these places are reachable by public transport (trains).

# 8 Holidays

There are several public holidays in Italy:

- 1st of January
- 6th of January
- easter Sunday and Monday
- 25th of April
- 1st of May
- 2nd of June
- 15th of August
- 1st of November
- 7th of December (only in Milano)
- 8th of December
- 25th and 26th of December

If one of these holidays is on a Thursday or Tuesday people usually take Friday/Monday off as well (i.e. you should take holidays as well). During holiday periods the university building will be closed. These periods are always announced via email. Furthermore, during the first three weeks of August basically all of Italy and also Milano is on holiday. Most shops and bars will be closed, so it is a good thing to plan not to be in Milano during this period. Especially because it is also too hot.

Welcome to Italy. Welcome to Milano.  
And good luck with the bureaucracy. You will need it.

Reason for change of timings ?

Title \* ?  
DR - Borse di dottorato di ricerca

Start location ?  
MILANO

Type of Request \* ?  
MPR - MISSIONI SU PROGETTI

Head of Project \* ?  
RAGAZZI STEFANO

Project ?  
2018-CONT-0165 - DOTTORATO DI RICERCA IN FISICA E ASTRONOM

Structure concerned \* ?  
DIPARTIMENTO DI FISICA "GIUSEPPE OCCHIALINI"

Paying structure \* ?  
DIPARTIMENTO DI FISICA "GIUSEPPE OCCHIALINI"

Regulation \* ?  
TES - REGOLAMENTO DI ATENEO

Reason \* ?  
Going to the WMAG 2022 (What matter(s) around galaxies 2022) conference and to give a talk there. 97/400

Notes ?  
0/2000

Description \* ?  
90 - Ricerca di base

Method ?  
List of expenses incurred

Costo presunto indennità forfettaria  
0

Mission without expenses ?

Missione cofinanziata ?

Figure 1: Example on how to fill out the mission on u-web. Remember that you have to change the *Head of project*, *Project*, *Structure Concerned* and *Paying Structure* to fit your department. *Head of Project* is the responsible person for your PhD school.