

Geoscope

The Student Magazine of the
Departement of Geography

Ersti-Guide

*Tips and Tricks for a successful start
to your studies in Geography and Earth System Science
at the University of Zurich*



Welcome to the GIUZ!

On behalf of the Department of Geography at the University of Zurich, we would like to warmly welcome you. This special issue of the Geoscope provides an overview of the most important information about your studies.

«Every beginning is hard», but it doesn't have to be that way, does it? Yeah, we agree. That is why we've put together a guide for you Erstis (our nickname for you first-semester students) to help you get the hang of things as quickly as possible.

So, who do I mean by «we»? First and foremost, the Geoscope editorial team, together with the GIUZ study advise office. Behind the scenes, however, there is also the Geoteam — the student association for geography and Earth System Sciences at the University of Zurich. In particular, the Geoteam will serve as an important point of contact alongside the study advise office. But more on that in the guide itself.

The Geo/ESS program is one of the coolest out there (completely unbiased, of course). We sincerely hope that you'll enjoy it just as much as all your predecessors did. And if things get rough and you start to have doubts or need help, you're never alone. Reach out to your fellow students, the Geoteam, or us here at Geoscope. As the Musketeers so inspiringly put it, back in 1844:

«One for all, and all for one!»

That is how we want it to be here, too :) With that in mind, we wish you a great start and lots of success!

Francesca
Editor-in-Chief



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On the back of the guide, you will find the Dobar calendar for the upcoming semester. Be sure to mark the dates on your calendar, grab all your old and new friends, and come on by!

Imprint

Geoscope: Ersti-Guide

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The Checklist



Can you check off all these items? Great – then you're already on the right track to a successful start at university. If not, just catch up quickly.

☐ UZH Login and Email

After enrollment, you will find your personal password letter including your login details in the application portal: your UZH shortname and your UZH email address (usually firstname.lastname@uzh.ch). You will need these to log in to most UZH platforms. You will also need the Microsoft Authenticator app for every login. For your email account, download Microsoft Outlook as well. You will receive most of your information via email, so it is important to check your inbox regularly.

☐ GIUZ Login / RDS (Remote Desktop Server)

For modules that include computer-based exercises (e.g., GEO113), you will need a GIUZ login. This allows you to log in to computers at Irchel and use the RDS. The RDS allows us work on our own laptops instead of the large screens. Installation instructions are available on the GIUZ website. You will receive more information from the GIUZ IT department as soon as you register for such a module.

☐ OLAT - Platform (Online Learning and Training)



OLAT is the main platform for accessing your module materials. There you will find lecture slides, reading lists, and video recordings of the lectures. Courses appear automatically after you have registered for a module – sometimes with a delay of a few days. It is best to mark your currently enrolled modules as favorites so they always appear right on the home page.

☐ ETH - Special Students University of Zurich

To pursue your studies, you will need an ETH login, since some required modules (e.g., Dynamic Earth) are held there. To obtain a login, you must register as a special student. Furthermore, ETH uses Moodle instead of OLAT for accessing course materials. Please note: At ETH, you must register for exams. This is done through their main platform, «mystudies»: Updates regarding this are always sent via ETH email (add your Outlook account or link your ETH email to your UZH email so that your ETH emails get forwarded to your UZH email.)



☐ Course Registration / Course Catalog

Module registration for the upcoming semester usually opens in mid-August or mid-January. Please note: Tuition must be paid in advance; otherwise, you will not be able to register for modules. If your (required) modules include seminars, you will need to sign up for a group. There are several groups with limited capacity, and registration is on a «first come, first served» basis. There are always enough spots available, but if you are working part-time, for example, and need a specific time slot, it is worth registering early.

☐ AI 111 Artificial Intelligence and Critical Thinking

This module is required in the first semester of the GEO and ESS programs and is offered as an intensive course one week before the start of the semester. This year, the intensive course will take place on:

Wednesday, 9. September - Friday, 11. September (Exam: Saturday, 12. September)

☐ NTA (Disability Office)

NTA stands for «compensation for disadvantages». If you are eligible, you must contact the FSB (disability office of UZH) to discuss your case. The deadlines for NTA applications are:

- For courses: up to 2 weeks before the start of the course
- For course assessments: by the end of the 4th week after the start of the course.

Points of Contact

The Geoteam

The Geoteam is the student association for Geography and Earth System Sciences at the University of Zurich. The executive board consists of bachelor's and master's students from the GEO, ESS, and – most recently – Spatial Data Science programs.

The executive board has two main tasks:

1. To support students in their studies
2. To offer a break from daily university life

The Geoteam represents the interests and concerns of GIUZ students in various committees and councils, supports the first-semester orientation day, and organizes informational events on minors and career prospects. To balance things out, the association also organizes various events during the semester. These include the well-known Dobar (Thursday Bar), as well as hiking and skiing weekends, gliding days, Geojass and Geoguessr tournaments, and much more.

The Geoteam is a nonprofit organization. The proceeds generated by Dobars and other events are used to fund their organization and implementation.

✉ geoteam@geo.uzh.ch

🌐 www.geoteam.uzh.ch

📷 [geoteam.uzh](https://www.instagram.com/geoteam.uzh)

Geoscope - the GIUZ student magazine

Geoscope is the student magazine at GIUZ and is published twice a year, right at the start of each new semester. This special issue, which you're holding in your hands right now, is produced exclusively for first-semester students during the fall semester.

Printed copies are distributed at the start of the semester or can be found at specific locations, but please note: quantities are limited. However, you can always find the latest issue online on our website (p.s.: old issues are also available in the archive on the website and at the UB).



The main issue of Geoscope contains information about life at GIUZ – about the degree program itself and its modules, as well as profiles of our professors. But it also serves as a platform for creativity and discussion, featuring reports, exciting interviews, and even puzzles and fun activities to enjoy in between. So there's something for everyone!

The magazine has been around since 1971 and has seen a lot over the years. In the past, the editorial team has regularly lacked creative, curious minds. The current editorial team came together in the summer of 2025 and revived Geoscope after a pause of several years.

Want to get involved? Send us an email if you want to contribute a feature story or join the team.

✉ geoscope@geo.uzh.ch

🌐 www.microsite.geo.uzh.ch/geoscope

Student Advisory at GIUZ

Our GIUZ study advice service supports you through every stage of your studies – from planning to graduation. You can either fill out an online contact form on the website or schedule an appointment.

Office hours are every Tuesday from 13:00 - 16:30 in room 25 K 10.

Our tip: If you have any questions, check the GIUZ website first. Under «Downloads and Forms» in particular, you'll find useful guidelines, module overviews, and – newly added – a few tutorials.

Sarah Ruoss - Your Student Advisor Introduces Herself

Dear soon-to-be geographers and Earth System scientists, I am very pleased to welcome you to our study programs. My name is Sarah Ruoss, and I have been the student advisor at GIUZ starting this year. I'd like to briefly introduce myself so you know who to contact with any questions about your studies.

I completed my high school diploma through adult education at KME and then studied geography at UZH. What fascinates me most about geography is the way it brings together the natural and social sciences. You learn never to view phenomena from just one perspective, but always to consider the interplay between people and the environment. For me, this versatility was one of the subject's greatest strengths during my studies

While pursuing my master's degree, I taught at the elementary school – an experience that showed me how much joy I get from imparting knowledge and guiding others. However, since I had already completed a very long educational journey, I decided not to pursue a teaching certificate for high schools for the time being and to enter the workforce directly. Since February 2026, after completing my master's degree in general geography, I have been working on the Teaching team at GIUZ.

For me, the position as a student advisor perfectly combines several elements: my previous experience in the sales sector, the expertise I gained from my geography studies, and direct contact with students. I'm now happy to share with you the knowledge I've gained over the years as a student myself. When talking with students, it's especially important to me that you don't hesitate to ask questions—whether they're about planning your studies, choosing courses, getting credits recognized, or even basic uncertainties about college life. I see my role not only as providing formal information but also as a point of contact for any questions that arise regarding your studies. It's very important to me that we interact as equals, so that you leave a conversation feeling that you've been taken seriously, regardless of how “simple” or “complicated” your question may seem. Furthermore, I know from my own experience that not everyone's academic path follows a linear course. Detours, doubts, or changes in direction are not failures in my view, but rather part of the process. And finally, I try to give you honest and practical advice.

I look forward to an exchange with you, whether it's regarding organizational questions about starting your studies or making major decisions along the way. Welcome to UZH, and I hope you enjoy discovering geography!

✉ teaching-support@geo.uzh.ch

☎ +41 44 635 51 18

🌐 www.geo.uzh.ch/studying



Further Points of Contact

Central Student Advising Office:

Student Financial Aid:

Studying & Family:

UZH Student Association VSUZH:

Psychological Counseling Center:

Nightline Zurich:

www.studienberatung.uzh.ch/en

www.studienfinanzierung.uzh.ch/en

www.familien.uzh.ch/en

www.vsu.uzh.ch

www.pbs.uzh.ch/en

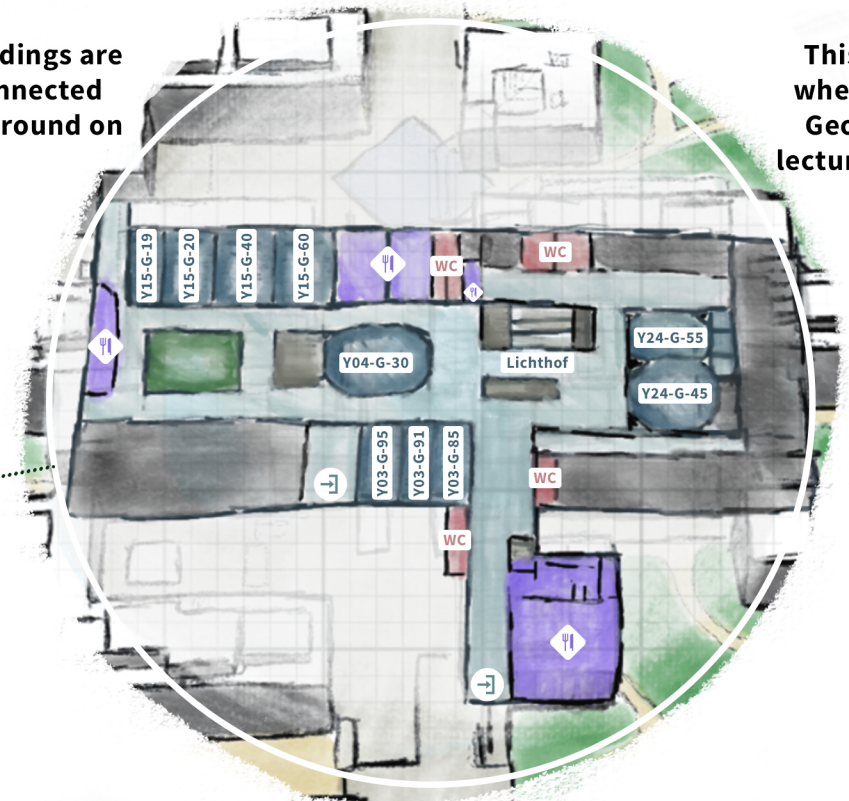
www.nightline.ch



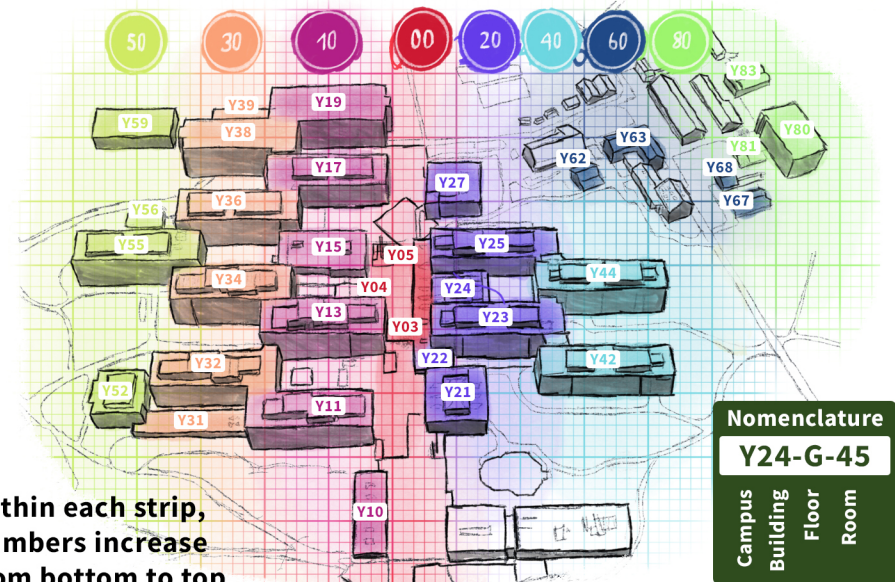


All buildings are interconnected under ground on floor G.

This is also where most Geography lectures take place.



Buildings are numbered along vertical strips: odd tens on the left, even tens on the right, and 01-09 in the center.



Within each strip, numbers increase from bottom to top.

Underrated Minors

«Underrated Minors» is a series in which we aim to introduce first-year geography students to lesser-known minor subjects, since first-year students in the geography program at UZH have hardly any time for a minor anyway and could therefore still switch without any trouble.

Religious Studies

Many geography students who are particularly interested in human geography choose minors in subjects like economics, sociology or political science. You too? Then you might be missing out on something.



When a powerful tech billionaire calls a young environmental activist the «Antichrist», when young Looksmaxxers are using hammers to polish their own faces and want to break out of the «Matrix», and when young women are spammed by the TikTok algorithm with content about manifestation, witchcraft, and «tradwives» then it's time to specifically engage with worldviews. Especially those that may seem foreign or even unappealing to us.

And that is precisely what the study of religion is all about. The concept of religion here is explicitly not limited to institutional communities, such as the Catholic Church. At the Department of Religious Studies, current research includes, among other topics, conspiracy narratives, bodybuilding, and artificial intelligence.



While human geography typically analyzes social processes through the lenses of space, power, or economics, the department of religious studies focuses on systems of meaning and analyzes values and religious interpretations of the world. As a result, the two disciplines complement each other perfectly. Since the Department of Religious Studies is also one of the smallest departments at UZH, you'll benefit from small classes and particularly personalized and individualized support from instructors and professors.

Curious? You can find all the information about Religious Studies here:



📷 uzh_religionswissenschaft

🌐 www.religionswissenschaft.uzh.ch

Famous Graduate with a Minor in Religious Studies:

Olivia Röllin

Host of SRF «Sternstunden: Philosophie / Religion»

Text and photography: Gian-Berno Fark

Tips and Tricks

Learning, studying, revising



The GEOFILES

1 In the Geofiles, you'll find summaries of the mandatory modules for the Geo/ESSdegree programs, as well as a collection of past exam questions - a true treasure trove! You can access them via the Geoteam website.



2 Summaries of other courses, degree programs, as well as from ETH can be found on uniboard.ch, and for ETH, also on CommunitySolutions and in the Polybox.

3

Struggling with Math? MathCourses



Math problems? MathCourses, run by Markus Hirschi, offers mid-semester review courses and exam preparation courses (PVKs) after the semester for our required math modules MAT182 and MAT183. He has years of experience, knows the modules inside and out and provides excellent support to help you overcome any mathematical challenges.

www.mathcourses.ch
info@mathcourses.ch

Advise and tips straight from Markus himself (in German):



4 University Library of Natural Sciences, aka the UB (Y15), offers:

- Study spaces, some of which can be reserved via the website 7 days in advance
- Personal counseling to get help with topics such as literature research and management, questions about the use of AI, and much more.
- Courses for Geo- & ESS students in the bachelor's and master's programs (GEO186, GEO802, BIO248)
- Website with many useful links to information resources under «Subjects & Support».

Text: Merula Stout

🌐 www.ub.uzh.ch

UB Learning Center Irchel, aka Strickhof or Stricki (Y63)



5 offers quiet study rooms and group rooms that can be reserved. Here, you can come and go 365 days a year with your student ID. Plus, there are cozy sleeping spots in the attic, just in case 3 coffees and 2 mates aren't enough to make those dark circles under your eyes disappear.

6 Other Study Areas

VSUZH Stübli (Y23-H-92), at the tables in the hallways of all Irchel buildings, including on the Gymnasium side (Y31 - Y36)

7 Don't study alone, study together!

Discussing the material and going over it verbally is often more effective than staring at a summary for hours on end.

8 Past Exams

Work through past exam questions. Don't wait until the day before the exam to do so. That way, you'll see where you're still struggling and what the lecturers consider important.

Everything about Life at the University

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UZH

UZHnow App

UZHnow is an app that guides you through your daily life at UZH. In it, you'll find your class schedule, your grades, a digital version of your student ID, and all the university's canteens.

The App includes a campus map and a section called «Campus Life», where announcements and other events are posted. It also features the Marketplace for part-time jobs, internships, study opportunities, and more.

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Hola, ciao and bonjour

UZH and ETH jointly offer language courses worth 1–2 ECTS credits. Perfect for filling out your elective course load and refreshing your foreign language skills.

www.sprachenzentrum.uzh.ch

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Project Neptun

Don't have a laptop or tablet yet? For 4 weeks at the start of the fall and spring semesters, there are Neptun Waves, during which you can snag recommended hardware with big discounts.



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ETH Courses

In the past, ETH offered «Minors» in spatial planning, atmosphere and climate, and forestry. These are no longer available, but you can still take these modules and have them accredited toward your elective credits. In

general, ETH modules are a good way to fulfill your elective requirements. If you'd like to pursue a master's degree at ETH, such as in Atmosphere and Climate, you'll even need to take certain modules as prerequisites – it's worth checking early on what's required for each program.

Everything about Life around the University

13 ASVZ - everything you could ever dream of when it comes to sports

CHF 35.00 from your tuition goes toward your ASVZ membership. The ASVZ offers a huge selection of classes in every sport you can imagine. From fitness classes, yoga, and Pilates to swimming lessons, rowing, and surfing, as well as dance classes, martial arts, and team sports like basketball and volleyball – everything is possible. At Irchel, you'll also find a relatively large gym with strength training and cardio equipment, which is also included in the ASVZ membership. Take advantage of the fact that you have access to so many sports and can try out many new ones.

ASVZ

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Here you'll find weekly new discounts on a variety of products. Whether it's clothes, kitchen appliances, or shoes – they've got it all covered.

15 Part-time jobs, internships, and more

You can find these and other opportunities in the UZHnow app (Marketplace), on the GIUZ website, and at UZHcareers.

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Looking for a WG?

In addition to UZH's housing service, there are also the platforms WOKO and JUWO, which offer apartments and rooms in shared apartments for students.

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Geoteam Events

Dobars, GeoJass, minor program information, career panels and so on: Check out these events. Seriously. Especially at the Dobars, where you can make new connections, for example by working a shift behind the bar (for which you'll be rewarded with drink vouchers).

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Check out the Geoscope.

The editorial team always strives to write articles that are interesting and useful for you. From module reviews and exchange semester reports to interviews and quizzes, there's something for everyone.

The Canteen-Guide: Ratings You Won't Find Anywhere Else



Mensa Irchel

The Irchel Mensa is the main canteen on the Irchel Campus. It offers daily meal options with meat, vegetarian, and vegan choices, a separate salad bar and a hot buffet. If the daily special doesn't appeal to you, there's always schnitzel and fries. At lunchtime, especially around noon, you should expect longer wait times due to its popularity.

Price: \$ - \$\$\$

Choice: 5 menus, warm & cold buffet

Variety (1 = barely, 5 = excellent): 5

Ambiance (1 = bad 5 = excellent): 2



Food Trucks

The food trucks offer an alternative to the traditional cafeteria menu every day. The trucks change depending on the day of the week, but the weekly schedule remains consistent, so popular options like Tenz Momo or the pizza truck are regularly available. Prices vary depending on the food truck and are usually higher than those at the canteen. The trucks are located outside near the blue square. Wait times may vary depending on how popular a particular offer is.

Price: \$\$\$ - \$\$\$\$

Choice: Foodtrucks change daily

Variety (1 = barely, 5 = excellent): 5

Ambiance (1 = bad, 5 = excellent): 4



Cafeteria Seerose

Strictly speaking, the Cafeteria Seerose isn't a canteen, but rather the cafeteria on the Irchel campus. It's a great spot for breakfast, especially in the morning, with yogurt bowls, croissants, bread and coffee or tea. If you need a quick lunch, you'll find sandwiches, pre-packaged salads, pizza slices, soup of the day, and – if you're lucky – the «5er» menu. You can also have dinner (take-away possible as well).



Price: \$\$\$

Choice: Snacks, pizza, coffee, drinks, desserts, pastries und cakes

Variety (1 = barely, 5 = excellent): 2

Ambiance (1 = bad, 5 = excellent): 3

The Yard

The YARD is the newest canteen on the Irchel campus and was created from the former canteen of the neighboring cantonal school. As a result, it's used not only by university students but also by high school students. The menu features specialties from around the world, classic comfort food dishes, as well as sandwiches, salads, desserts and various snacks for in between meals. The author hasn't tried The YARD herself yet, but she thinks: It's worth a try! Who knows, maybe a new favorite is waiting here.

Price: \$ - \$\$

Choice: different menus, snacks etc.

Variety (1 = barely, 5 = excellent): 3

Ambiance (1 = bad, 5 = excellent): 2



Green Kitchen Lab

The Green Kitchen Lab is the author's personal favorite, and for good reason. The creative menus offer exceptional flavors. The dishes are vegetarian or vegan, but can be supplemented with a meat side dish if desired. Two menus are offered at the beginning of the week and replaced by two new ones midweek. Here too, you should expect longer waiting times around lunchtime.

Price: \$\$\$

Choice: 2 menus (vegi/vegan) + meat as Add on

Variety (1 = barely, 5 = excellent): 2

Ambiance (1 = bad, 5 = excellent): 4



Dobar Klassifikation

Herbstsemester 2026

Dozbar

17. September

Dobar feat. FVCom

15. Oktober

Dobar feat. FVCom

12. November

Tätschalp Dobar

3. Dezember

Glückbar feat. BIUZ

17. Dezember

Join our WhatsApp Community and
your Year Group Chat!

Geounity



GEO26



ESS26

