

New Student Orientation to CERN

US LUA

Revision History

- 10-Jan-2025: New European travel requirements
- 1-Nov-2024: CMS invitation letter link
- 6-May-2022: D.A., post-COVID updates, with additions from N.Rawal
- 11-Oct-2019: D.A., minor edits
- 10-Oct-2018: D.A., add some info for moving
- 17-July-18: D.A., significant updating, add infirmary, Secretariat contacts
- 24-Feb-2016: D.A., general updating
- 5-Nov-2013: D.A., add code of conduct, Pompiers #
- 22-May-2013: D.A., a few updates, bike renting, links to USLUO pages
- 12-Feb-2013: D.Acosta, initial version

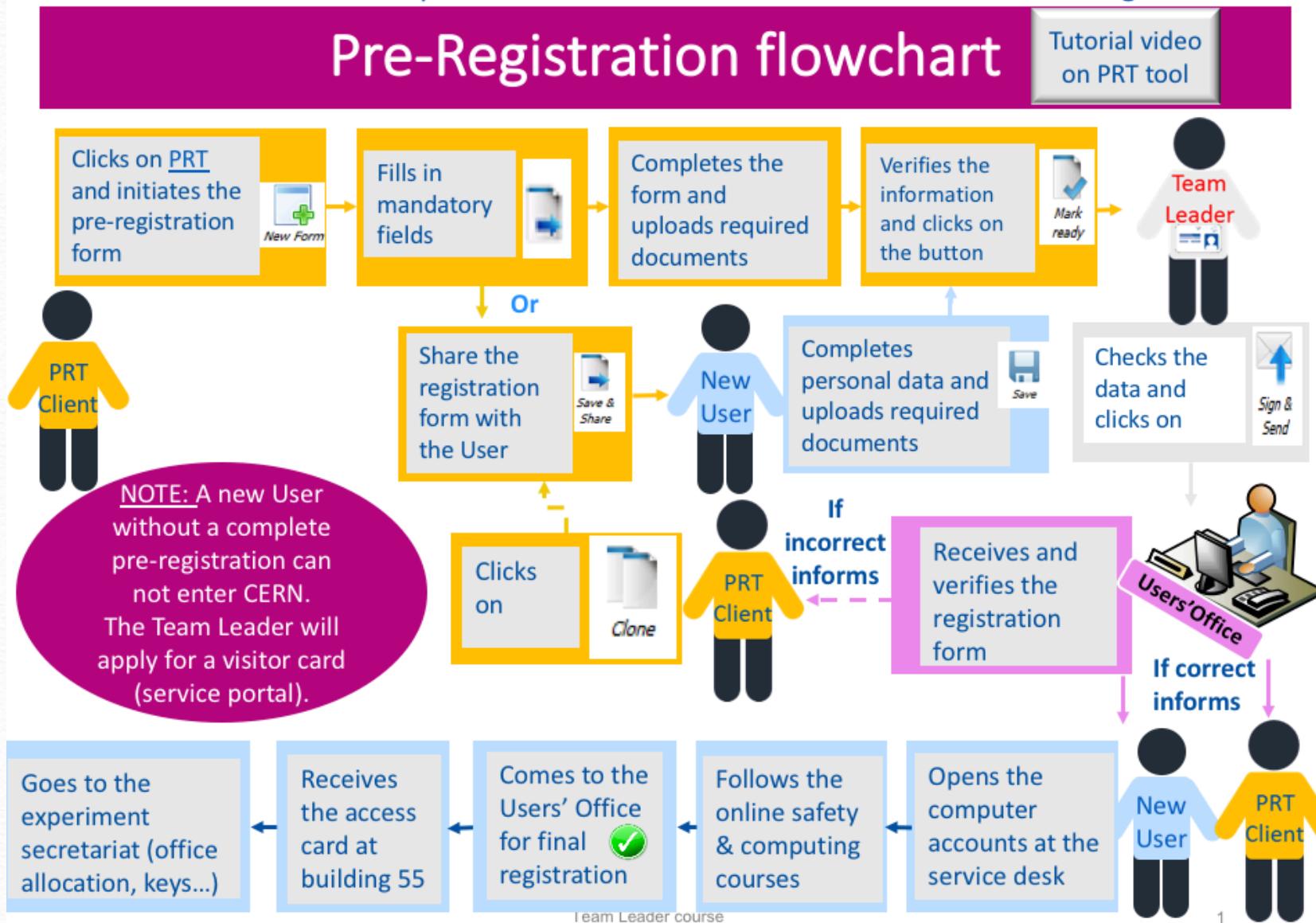
Preparation Before Your Trip

- Apply for a passport if you don't already have a valid one.
- Prepare necessary documents and apply for visa if needed —>
- Register for a CERN computer account —>
- Have User pre-registration forms filled out online in advance by your institute TEAM leader —>
 - Available here: <http://ph-dep-usersoffice.web.cern.ch/ph-dep-UsersOffice/>
 - Have also proof of medical insurance that covers you while abroad, including work accidents
 - CERN now offers insurance for purchase through Allianz for all users for short and longer term:
 - Have your Department sign the Home Institute Declaration form that you are a student at your University and for what time period. You must use this official form:
 - <http://usersoffice.web.cern.ch/sites/usersoffice.web.cern.ch/files/pdf/Formalities/HomeInstitutionDeclarationforUO.pdf>
 - Register your international travel with your university (insurance reasons, etc.)

For your group's Team Leader

<https://prt.cern.ch/prt2/secure/?#overview>

Team Leader responsibilities towards Team Members - Before arriving at CERN



Get a CERN Computer Acct. Account

- Can be obtained in advance without being at CERN
- Register with the Secretariat of your experiment - your institute TEAM leader will need to approve it
- CMS: <http://cms.cern.ch/iCMS/jsp/secr/reg/regCMS.jsp>
 - Also: “Welcome to CMS” document
- Once this is done they give you an ID number. An email is then sent with instructions about setting up your computer account

Documents and Visas

- Latest information available from CERN Users Office:
<http://ph-dep-usersoffice.web.cern.ch/ph-dep-UsersOffice/>
- Everyone needs to apply for a *convention d'accueil* through CERN by contacting your experiment's secretariat
 - Necessary for all nationals from countries outside the EU/Swiss, and also necessary for enrollment in Allianz medical insurance
- “**New**”: If you will be coming to CERN for longer than 8 days in a year, even if less than 90 days in Switzerland or the EU, you need to obtain a visa ('Assumption of official function'). The authorities consider such research activities as work. So you need to contact the Swiss or French embassy once getting your CERN forms. Traveling as a tourist may still work based on anecdotal stories.
- Invitation letters can be prepared by your experiment's Secretariat
 - CMS: <https://cms-invitation-letters.web.cern.ch/>
 - For Swiss visas, you can go to the embassy or 4 (out of the 5) consulates: everywhere except Los Angeles. The southeast U.S. needs to visit the embassy in Atlanta
 - You will receive invitation letter from CERN for visa application and the Note Verbale for French Visas are directly sent to Embassy. A copy of Note Verbale would be sent to the embassy at Washington (Just for information if asked at the time of interview)
 - Make sure that the passports of all traveling family members are valid for a long period of time
 - Married couples will need a copy of their marriage certificate to get the spouse a CERN access card.
 - Some more info here: <https://www.usluo.org/cern-guide-2/visas>

New travel requirements to/through UK & EU

- Please take note of new requirements for travel to or through the UK
 - Started on January 8, 2025.
 - Electronic Travel Authorization is needed.
 - UK opens pre-travel requirement to non-Europeans - GOV.UK
 - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-an-electronic-travel-authorisation-eta>
- The EU is also planning new travel requirements
 - ETIAS Travel Authorization to enter most European countries.
 - <https://etias.com/>
 - The new EU requirement is not implemented yet, but is expected to start in Q4 2026
 - Travelers from the US will need to stay informed and be prepared to apply in good time.

(Past) COVID Restrictions

- During the COVID-19 pandemic the restrictions at CERN and for the Swiss and French regions have varied quite a bit over time, from lock-downs requiring forms to leave your residence, to few or no restrictions.
 - Since May 2022 CERN is at **Level-1, Green**
 - Higher CERN levels require wearing proximeters, masking indoors, and have room occupancy restrictions, and encouraging teleworking
- CERN's COVID info and four level restrictions can be found here:
<https://hse.cern/covid-19-information>
- Traveling to Switzerland had required proof of vaccination/booster within a certain time period
- That said, as of May 2022, there are few mandatory masking requirements in the U.S., CERN, Geneva, on the flight to Geneva, the tram, etc.
 - Expect few people to be masking.

Some Practical Information

- Your CERN access card (ID) will get you through the various gates and turnstiles to enter CERN once you are registered
- The CERN restaurants and kiosks now finally take credit cards, and even phone wireless transactions (Apple or Google Pay)
- For dates on forms, note that Europeans list the date as dd.mm.yyyy. i.e. the 1st of December is 01.12.2016
- Time is also generally referenced to a 24 hour clock (military time). For example 3pm is 15:00
- The tap water is safe to drink in Switzerland and France
- You can use Skype, Facetime, etc. to phone home

Just Before You Travel

- Contact your bank and credit card companies and inform them of your travel plans (Otherwise you may get a rude surprise when your card is blocked after its first use!)
 - If you are planning to move longer-term, consider bank ATM and credit cards that don't charge high international transaction fees
- Arrange any travel advance with your institution if you will need money
- If you plan to use a cell phone (at least older ones) from a US carrier, you may need to check if your phone will work with the GSM networks in Europe.
- Note that data roaming in Europe is very expensive: check the costs. Best to limit use to WiFi, or purchase a SIM card in Europe.
- Make sure to bring any medicines
- Get a U.S. to Swiss/European plug adapter for your electronics (2-prong works in EU and Switzerland, but 3-prongs are different). Make sure all powered devices and chargers can take 240V ! (Read label on device)
- Bring your laptop and all the chargers you need for your devices, etc. (though you could always purchase what you forgot at, for example, Media Markt, on route de Geneve)
- If you have a lot of luggage, beware that a third bag can cost a lot on an airline! You may need to arrange a courier service.



Parlez-vous Français?

- Geneva is in French-speaking Switzerland.
- The Swiss, however, speak many languages, and cater to international business. You can generally get by with English in Switzerland (France is a different story).
- The scientific staff at CERN also use English, or perhaps “CERNglish” (shall we “automatize” that operation?)
- Nevertheless, to converse with the French outside CERN, to get more friendly service, and to know what you are ordering(!) it helps to pick up some basic French such as what you might find in a phrasebook, or use Google Translate :)
- And it's a cool opportunity to learn a new language!

Transportation: airport→CERN

- **Taxi:** Easiest but most expensive option. Just walk out of the Arrivals hall at the Geneva airport, tell the driver you want to go to CERN. Most likely you want to go to the CERN Hostel reception, building 39. Cost is roughly 30 CHF or so.
- **Uber** is also now an option in Geneva
- **CERN shuttle:** Operates during weekdays, 8:00-19:30. Schedule is [here](#) for Circuit 4 (when it restarts). Picks up at airport from downstairs from the *Arrivals* level where buses unload. Stops at Hostel and Main building. Look for CERN logo on van or bus. Free!
- **Bus / Tram:** Tickets are 3CHF from a ticket machine at the bus stop, and you can use a credit card. Push the “All Geneva” (Tout Geneve) button. For longer stays, **there are monthly and annual passes** that can be purchased that will be more economical. Sadly, the free ticket you could pick up any the airport baggage pick-up has ended in 2022.
 - Easiest path from airport arrivals is to follow signs to rental car counters, then exit terminal and walk to the road (on left) where there is a bus stop. Take any bus that stops there except **10 (Buses 23, 28, 57)** and exit at “**Blandonnet**”. Then take stairs up to tram station. Take **Tram 18** to CERN (the last stop!) Take the direction heading west away from downtown.
 - But you can also go up to the main bus area above the airport train station. Just note that buses heading in the direction you want toward CERN are sometimes around the building corner.
 - You can find all Geneva bus/tram schedules from [tpg.ch](#). You can type “aeroport” and “CERN” in the from/to fields



CERN shuttle
at airport

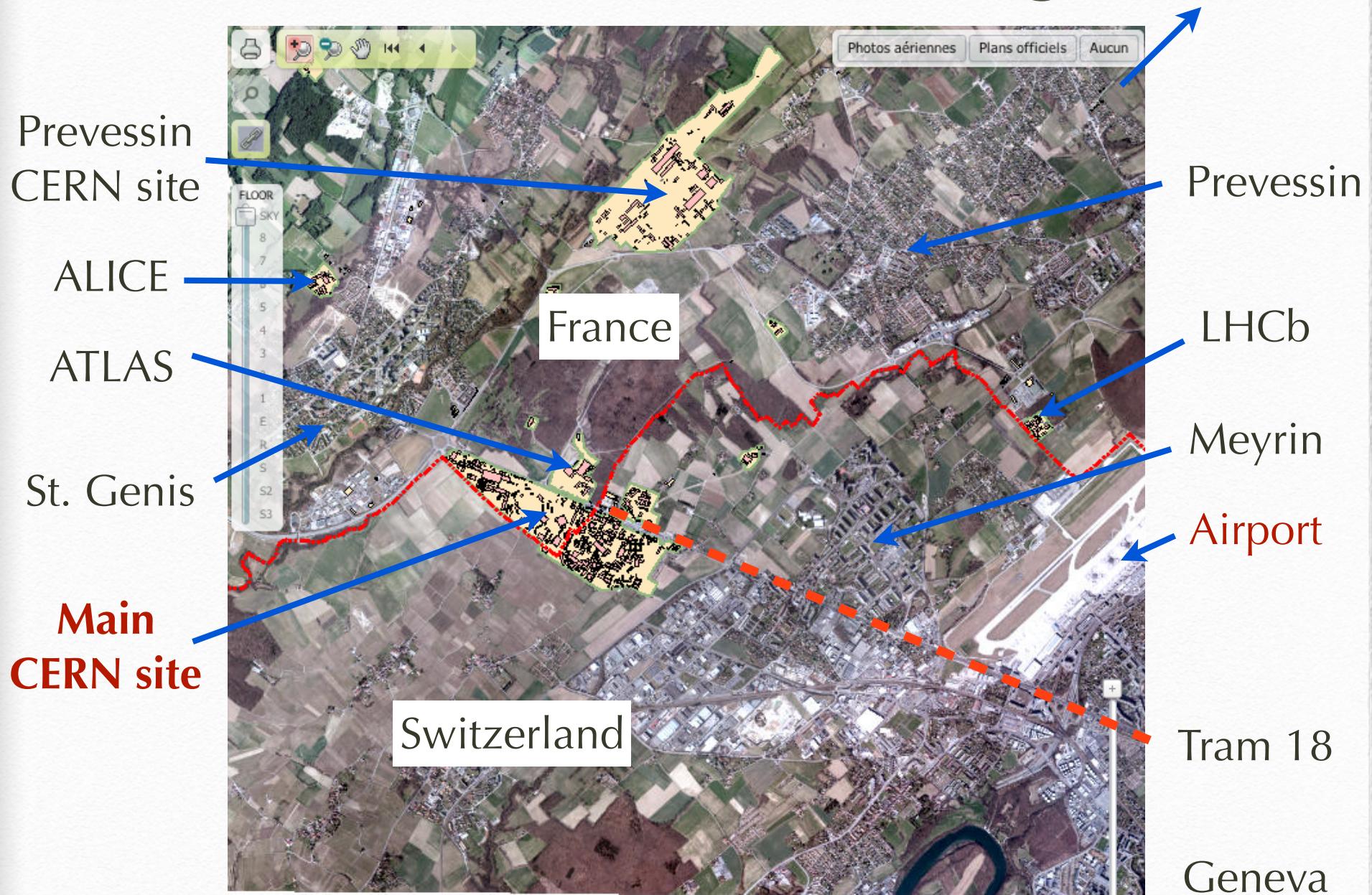


bus/tram ticket dispensers

Tram at CERN



CERN Surroundings



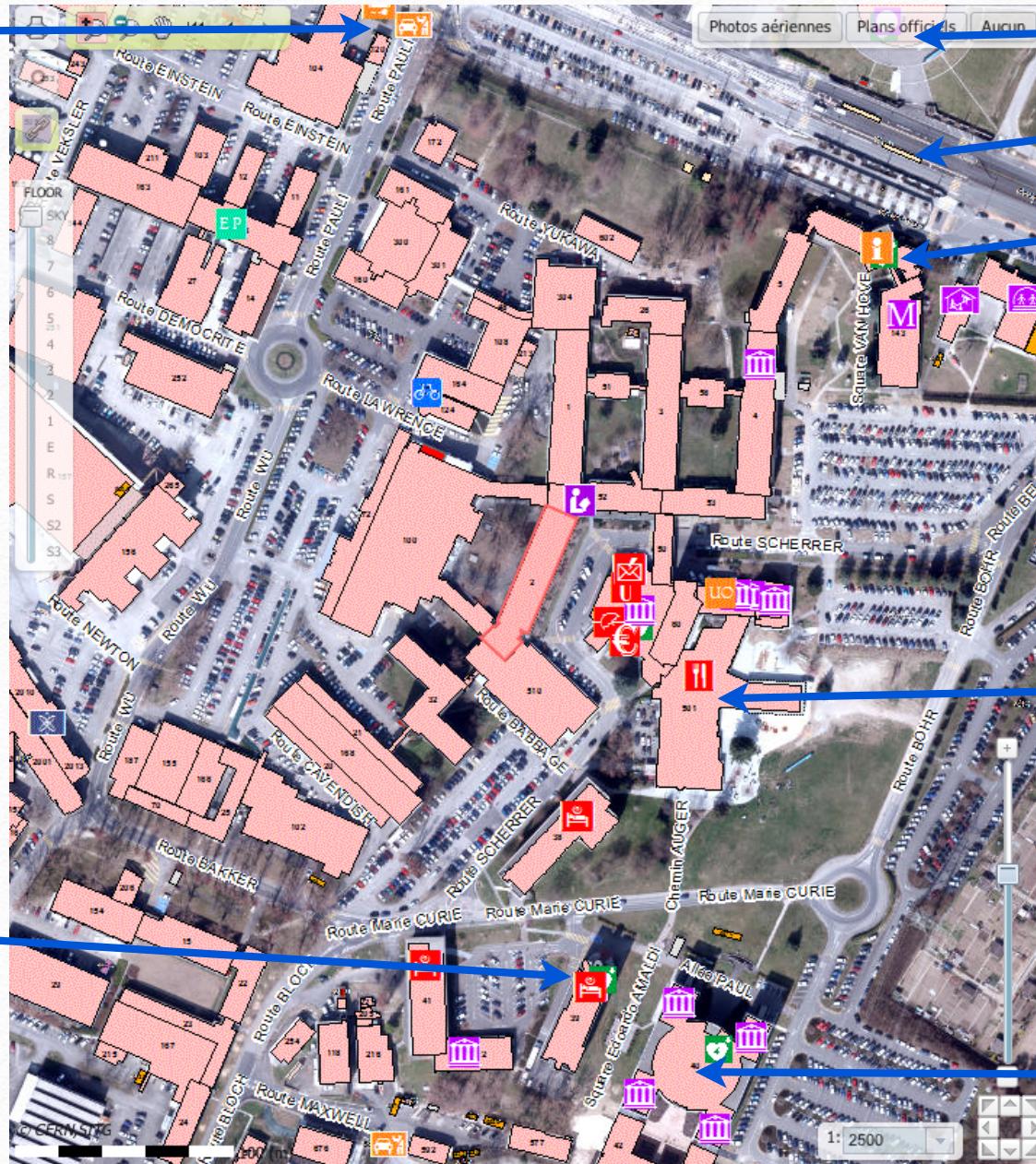
<https://maps.cern.ch/mapsearch/>

Getting Around CERN

Entrance B,
Building 55

Get the app!

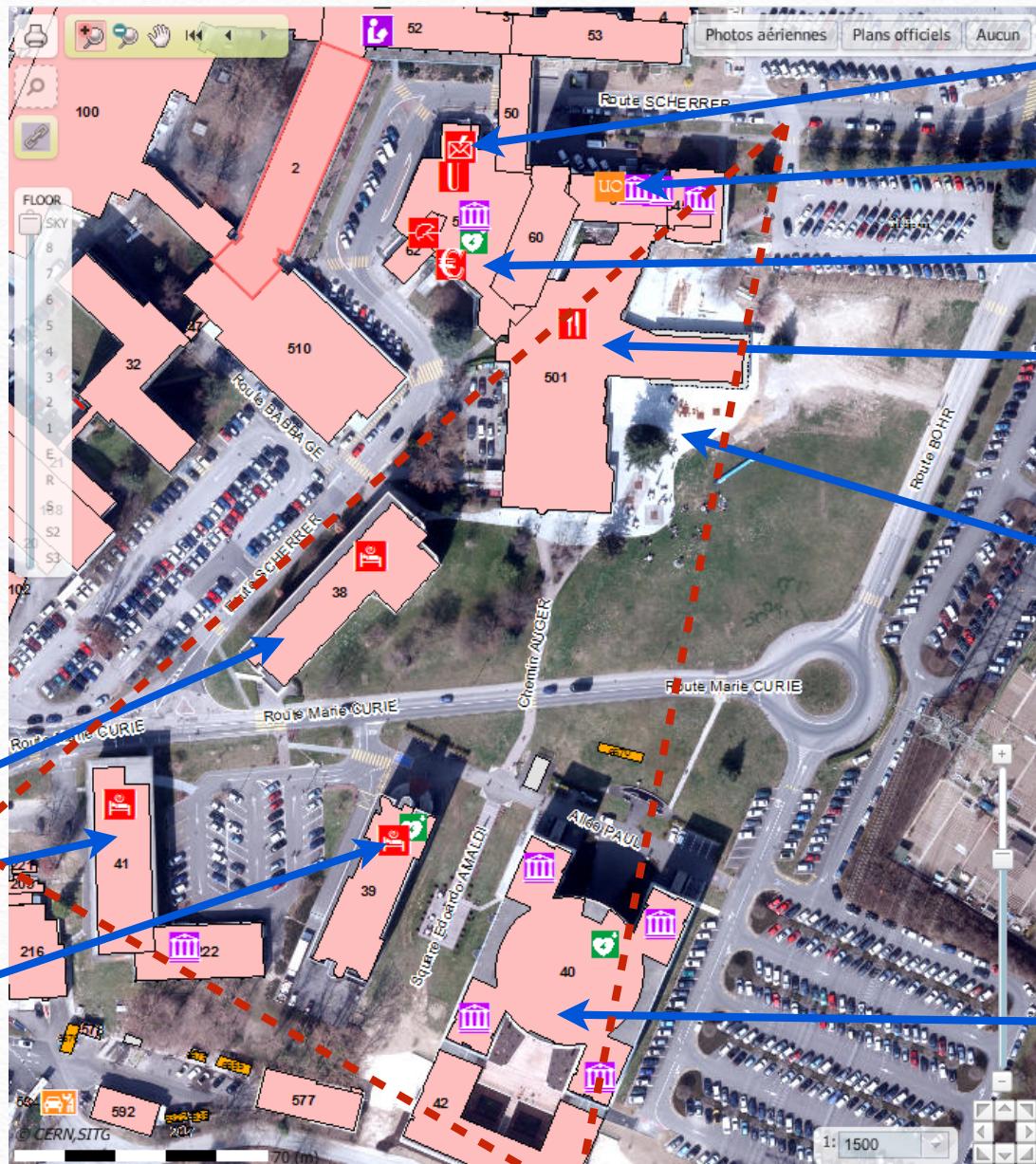
Hostel
Reception



<https://maps.cern.ch/mapsearch/>

The Main CERN Triangle

Hostel:
Bldg. 38
Bldg. 41
Reception
(Bldg. 39)



- Post Office
- Users Office
- Bank / ATMs
- Restaurant 1
- The “Terrace”
- Buildings 40 and 42 (offices)



CERN Hostel

- If you have a CERN login account you can book a reservation (or another CERN user could reserve you a room, or you can send an email):
<https://espace.cern.ch/hostel-service/default.aspx>
cern.hostel@cern.ch
- Reception and website also can help with nearby hotel reservations at the CERN rate
- Reception for check-in is in Building 39. Hours: Mon-Fri 7:30am to 11:00pm; Sat-Sun 09:00am to 11:00 pm
 - After hours please see guard at Entrance B
 - There are laundry rooms in the basements of the buildings. Obtain a laundry card from the reception (they also have soap). Usually 3.5 CHF/load
 - There are kitchens in the Building 39 and 38 hostels, ground level

Initial Steps at CERN

- Visit the Users Office on the first business day after your arrival. Building 61, near Restaurant 1
 - Turn in your registration forms. Have your Home Institute Declaration form from the university showing you are a student if it hasn't already been uploaded to the pre-reg tool.
 - Have proof of health insurance, or sign up for insurance upon arrival.
- For long-term stays:
 - At the User's office, apply for Swiss card (which you should get in a week) and French residence card (which takes longer time to get processed)
 - For French residence card take three latest passport photographs or you can take them at the photo booth near User's office. (Just carry some CHF with you)
- If all goes well, they will send you to building 55 (next to Entrance B) to get your CERN access card. If you have a vehicle, you also need to register it at the same building to be able to drive it onto the CERN site. (They use cool optical reading cameras to open the gates)
- Note: if you already had a CERN id card, you may still need to go to Bat.55 to reactivate it for the newer system if it's been a while

Initial Steps at CERN, Cont'd

- You need to take the online basic safety courses (<https://sir.cern.ch>): CERN Safety Introduction and Levels 4A, 4B, 4C, 4I for ATLAS, LHCb, CMS, or ALICE, respectively. Maybe also more specialized courses depending on the nature of your work (e.g. radiation, underground).
- Every electronic networked device you plan to use at CERN needs to be registered in order to access the WiFi or fixed ethernet. Web page should automatically come up when you try to connect. Otherwise: <https://network.cern.ch/register>. You can register also iPhones, iPads, ...
- Discuss with your group or experiment's Secretariat your work location.
- If you need an office key, obtain a form from your experiment's secretariat. Or you can create an EDH ticket at Document/General/ KeysRequest/

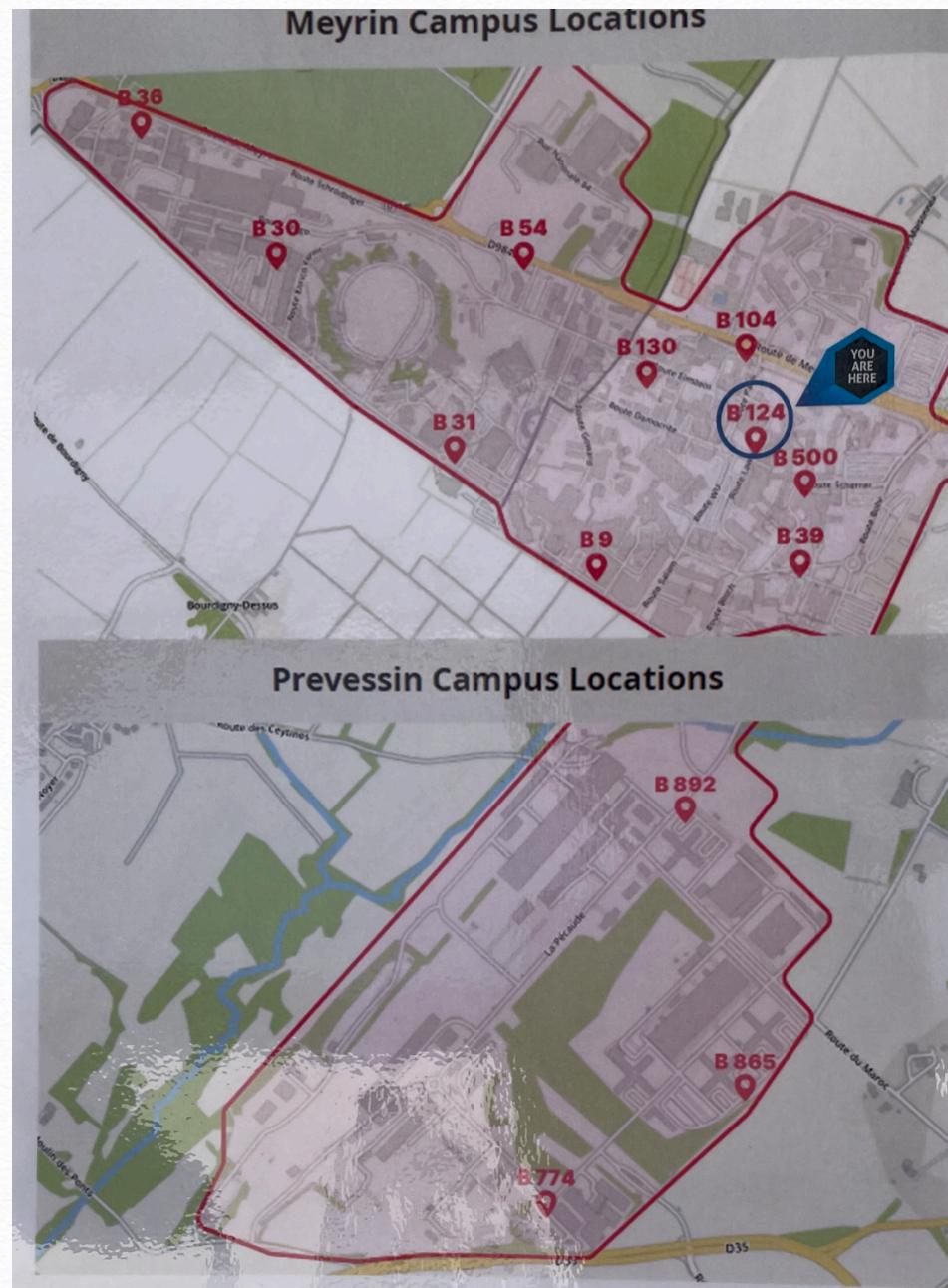
Next Steps for Getting Established

- CERN Market is a good source when looking for housing opportunities, furniture, etc.
- You can look for an apartment at CERN private market accommodation <https://smb-dep.web.cern.ch/fr/private-market-accommodation>
- Also there is a Facebook group Youngs@CERN
- It is important to set up a bank account locally in either France or Switzerland as soon as possible, depending where you plan to live (can be difficult for US citizens getting a Swiss bank account).
 - Be aware of wire transfer fees as well to transfer money from the US
 - Note that shipping items to/from the US is very expensive

Transportation Options

- The Geneva trams and buses are quite convenient, although a little less so in France. Be careful on weekends and holidays. Times and routes can be different than during the week. Note that there are monthly and annual passes available.
 - In addition to the tpg.ch site, consider downloading the free TPG app - very useful! Shows you when buses will stop at your location.
- CERN has initiated a free bike service (bikes, e-bikes, e-scooter) within CERN sites. Download app urban-connect and pickup bikes from the available bike stations. See next slide —>
- CERN shuttles also can get you around CERN site, to/from Prevessin site, and to/from airport. Schedule is [here](#)
 - The airport shuttle, Circuit 4, has not yet restarted (May 2022)
 - The CERN Hostel can also arrange a taxi for you to pick you up right at the Hostel (useful if your flight is early and before public transportation starts for the day!)

CERN Bike Stations



What to do if...

- Emergency
 - CERN site: call 74444 from CERN phone
Ambulance: 144 (CH) 15 (Fr)
Police: 117 (CH) /17 (Fr)
Fire: 118 (CH)/18 (Fr)
 - See also <https://www.usluo.org/cern-guide-2/health>
- Non-urgent problems at CERN (lost ID, computer account problems, illness, etc.)
 - Contact Service Desk: 77777, <http://cern.ch/service-portal>, or visit building 55
 - CERN Pompiers/Fire (non-urgent): 74848
 - CERN infirmary: 73802 (building 57, on Route Einstein on way to Pompiers)
 - 8.00 am to 5.30 pm, Monday to Friday
 - They will have a list of medical doctors in the area for non-emergency treatment. There is one nearby at Champs Frechets in Meyrin
 - More info here: <http://uslua.org/cern-guide-2/health>

CERN COVID Info

- If you have symptoms of COVID, have a positive test result, had a close contact, etc. you can self-declare/self-evaluate through CERN: <https://tramed.web.cern.ch/>
- Generally if you are positive for COVID, you should not come to the CERN site.
- If you're in the hostel, further information should be given as to where to relocate
- For those resident in the CERN area, certain medical appointments can be booked here: <https://plamed.web.cern.ch/>

COVID: Returning to the U.S.

- As of now (May 2022), the U.S. requires proof of a negative COVID test (or documentation that you had COVID and your doctor has signed off that you are healthy) within 24 hours of your departure
 - This can be an antigen or PCR test
- A convenient place to obtain such a test is near the airport:
 - M3 Sanitrade (Chemin de Joinville 28), along the Bus 10 route on Ave. Louis Casai, next to Crowne Plaza hotel
 - <https://www.m3-test.ch/> , tel: +41-22-809-07-35
 - Antigen test was free of charge for at least US folks, with results and documentation ready in 15 minutes
 - If you do test positive, you can get a follow-up PCR test (also free)
 - Positive tests, as of May 2022, require 5 days minimum of isolation (but not quarantine)



Code of Conduct

- Note that all users are expected to abide by the CERN code of conduct, which was established in 2010:
 - <http://cern.ch/codeofconduct>
- Anyone suspecting harassment is encouraged to contact the CERN Ombudsperson, earlier, not later. The ombuds is completely independent and confidential, and can offer informal advice, etc.
 - <http://ombuds.web.cern.ch/>

Well Being

- There is a young scientist group of volunteers to meet with US newcomers at CERN and to help with information about getting settled in (they will try to reach out to you, or you can reach them)
- Before the pandemic, US LUA hosted get-together parties at CERN for all US scientists twice per year (typically one in July)
- If you need to talk with someone...
 - CERN psychologist
 - Medical Service secretariat phone: 78435, 73186
 - psychologist-me@cern.ch
 - CERN ombudsperson, Office 500-1-004
 - Ombuds@cern.ch
 - phone: 7356

Information for Families

- Here is a useful site:
 - <http://www.genevafamilydiaries.net/>
- Note that the CERN crêche (day care) may have a very long wait list
- You will need to be proactive in contacting US insurance companies to get the necessary approval for medical procedures
- All visitors to CERN now need to be registered in order to pass through the gates and turnstiles. You can request them from here:
 - <https://cern.service-now.com/service-portal/report-ticket.do?name=cern-visitor-card&fe=visitor-access-card>

Life in Europe - The “bad”

- This is not the U.S.! Supermarkets close in the early evening (generally they are open later in France than in Switzerland), and most stores (aside from the boulangeries and a few markets) are closed on Sundays.
- The operating hours and frequency of buses and trams on weekends and holidays are limited. Check tpg.ch
- Lunch is traditionally 12:00-14:00. It may be hard to get a hot meal at a restaurant outside those hours, but not so much at CERN anymore with its kiosks
- Geneva is an expensive city! (As are the surrounding towns in France and Switzerland.) A pizza for one person costs about 20 CHF. Apartments are small and expensive.
- Washing machines are small, and take a long time. Make sure to convert from Celsius properly or you may boil your clothes. The machines in the CERN hostel cost about 3.5 CHF per load
- Make sure to weigh and tag your fruits and vegetables before checking out from the grocery store. Also expect to bag your own groceries and pay for the bags as well.
- Driving: take care in roundabouts, especially the multilane one in St. Genis and the one with a tram going through it in Meyrin. No right turns on red. Watch out for automated speed cameras (i.e. speed traps). Geneva fines are fairly hefty and increase exponentially.

Life in Europe - The Good!

- This is Europe! Do some exploring of Geneva, the mountains, the continent! Many historic and spectacular sights. Public transportation and trains actually work!
- Coffee is much better than in the U.S., and much more social. A beer or glass of wine costs about as much as bottled water. (Be careful not to overdo either!)
- Lunch is 12:00 - 14:00. That's right, all 2 hours!
- There is more to cheese than just Cheddar or Swiss! Try a fondue or a raclette dinner during the winter. And have you tried the chocolate? (the Swiss have the largest per capita consumption in the world). How about *glace*?
- Take a break from US politics!

Further info

- See also US-CMS GUIDE TO COMING TO AND LIVING AT CERN: [https://twiki.cern.ch/twiki/bin/view/Main/
USCMSPProjectOfficeCERN](https://twiki.cern.ch/twiki/bin/view/Main/USCMSPProjectOfficeCERN)