

Guidelines for new students

XAMK KOUVOLA CAMPUS



Kaakkois-Suomen
ammattikorkeakoulu

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Welcome to study in Xamk!

In this guidebook, you will find useful information necessary to start your studies at Xamk. **Please, read this extensive guide very carefully and save it for further consultations.**

Before coming to Finland

Before coming to Finland, you will need to make sure to:

- ✓ have participated to the online orientation
- ✓ have watched the "Tips for new students" videos series: [Tips for new students\(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...).
- ✓ have all the required documents to enter the country
- ✓ have bought your flight ticket
- ✓ have booked your accommodation
- ✓ have familiarized with the travel to Kouvola and all the public transportation needed to reach your accommodation
- ✓ have packed all the documents used to apply to your study programme
- ✓ have packed your luggage according to the season of arrival
- ✓ have read and started all the necessary procedures described in page 17 if you move to Finland with your children.

Online Orientation

An online orientation is arranged before starting your studies at campus. This info session is an opportunity to get information about practicalities related to arriving and settling in Kouvola. The online orientation will be held in a Teams meeting and participation is optional but highly recommended.

You can find the Teams link on Xamk Website: [Starting instructions for studies - Kaakkois-Suomen ammattikorkeakoulu Xamk](#)

Make sure to have all the required documents to enter Finland before flying to the country

Before moving to Finland, you must make sure to have all the required documents to enter the country. **The student is responsible of finding out what type of documents are needed to move to Finland**, if a residence permit is needed and all the required steps for obtaining one.

Generally, EU citizens may need to register their **right of residence** at the Finnish Immigration Services Migri and non-EU citizens must obtain a **residence permit** to live in Finland.

A residence permit application should be submitted as soon as possible after receiving the acceptance letter to the studies and confirmation of payment of the tuition fee, as the process might require several months, and you will need to obtain the permit before flying to Finland and start your studies. Make sure to meet all the requirements for your residence permit, such as valid passport, proof of finances, private health insurance, etc. As part of the process, you will most likely be asked to also visit a Finnish embassy or consulate personally for identification.

Find more information about moving to Finland in the Finnish Immigration Services website [Home | Maahanmuuttovirasto \(migri.fi\)](#) and youtube channel: [Maahanmuuttovirasto - YouTube](#).

*Note: In Finland, most of the services are done **digitally and independently** through digital forms, phone calls and email. Face-to-face is not a very common form of customer service in Finland. When getting an appointment in a public office, you will be offered the first available time in the calendar. If the time offered doesn't fit your schedule, please communicate it and you will be offered a new time for your appointment.*

It's also necessary to obtain a **travelling and health insurance** before moving to Finland. As a student, you will be personally responsible of covering all the medical bills if you become sick in Finland. You should obtain a private insurance to cover your medical and pharmaceutical expenses during your whole stay. We also advise checking that the insurance you will be using also includes liability coverage throughout the study period.

If you have **family members coming with you** to Finland, please make sure to arrange proper documentation for them as well. Notice that a student's family member will be granted a residence permit on a different basis than studies, which means requirements and rights might be different. Carefully read the Finnish Immigration Services website, to find out the process to follow for your family member.

*Note: **You are required to arrive to Finland before the date of the beginning of your studies.** We recommend arriving at least some days before the beginning of the studies, to be able to move and settle in your new accommodation comfortably and take your first steps in the country slowly.*

Accommodation possibilities in Kouvola

Searching and applying for accommodation is a student's responsibility. Students are free to choose what kind of accommodation suits best their needs.

Finding the right accommodation is a process that can take some time. For this reason, it's important to start searching for your new home as soon as possible, and **as soon as your study place is confirmed.**

It is important to **find an accommodation before arriving to Finland.** Please, note that it's not possible to walk in the housing companies on your arrival, ask for accommodation and expect to get one on the same day. This is not realistic due to the limited availabilities and existing waiting lists.

Kouvola offers two different options when it comes to accommodation:

- Local housing company (Kouvolan Asunnot)
- Private renters

1. Renting from Kouvolan Asunnot

The local housing company is called Kouvolan Asunnot. The company offers different types of accommodation in different parts of the city, at affordable prices. In Kouvolan Asunnot you can apply for **student apartments** (opiskelija-asunnot) or **rental apartments** (vuokra-asunnot):

- **Student apartments** (shared apartments) are usually shared apartments between 2 or 3 students. The price range for a student apartment is between 200-300€ per tenant, depending on the location/number of rooms present in the apartment. Please note, many student apartments are unfurnished, and you will need to buy your own furniture and household items. Shared laundry rooms and sauna are usually available in the building for your use. Water, heating, electricity, and internet are usually included in the rent price of students apartments, but you may need to buy your own modem to access the internet connection. A limited amount of students' family apartments is also offered. More info

about student apartments, rules, and contracts here: [For students - Kouvola Asunnot Oy](#).

- **Rental apartments** are private (not-shared) options and are usually advised if you move to Finland with family members. Price range for rental apartments is 500-800€, depending on size and location. Apartments are often unfurnished, and you will need to buy your own furniture and household items. Shared laundry rooms and sauna are usually available in the building. Please note, in most of the normal rental apartments, **electricity is not included in the rent price, and you are responsible of creating your own electricity contract** (more info below in “Examples of internet and electricity providers” section). Depending on the apartment, water and internet fees might be included in the rent, but you may need to buy a modem to get access to the internet connection. Check which utilities are included in the rent price before signing the rental agreement and make the contracts with the providers of the utilities that are not included (i.e. electricity contract).

If you wish to apply for a Kouvola Asunnot apartment, we recommend doing it **as soon as possible** due to the limited number of availabilities. The first step is to fill the digital application form you find on their website: [Homepage - Kouvola Asunnot Oy](#). After filling and sending the form, your application will be sent in the applicants queue. Kouvola Asunnot will contact you with an offer that you can accept by paying the deposit before the deadline indicated in the offer.

*Note: paying the deposit means you are accepting the offer. **Paying the deposit is binding!** The contract is automatically created based on the offer. Prices of the apartments are fixed and not negotiable.*

If you don't pay the deposit before the stated deadline, you may lose the accommodation offer.

Before coming to Finland, remember to be in touch with Kouvola Asunnot to agree on a time for the **pick-up of your apartment keys and signing the rental contract**. The office is located near the train station (5 min walk) at the address Kauppamiehenkatu 4, 45100.

Other general instructions related to applying and living in a Kouvola Asunnot apartments:

- Only one apartment is offered per applicant.
- Kouvola Asunnot does not make electricity contracts, but the residents must make the electricity contract themselves.
- The rental agreement is set to start from the arrival date indicated by the student. If the actual date of arrival differs from the one that the student has originally informed, Kouvola Asunnot will not make new contracts or give rent credits.
- Shared students apartments are reserved on a per-room basis, meaning that a friend cannot move into the same room.
- The notice period before moving out is one calendar month.

2. Renting from the private market

If you prefer to rent an apartment from **private renters**, check for availabilities in the links below:

- [Vuokraovi.com](#)
- [Oikotie Asunnot](#) (only in Finnish)

Note: You can use Google Translate to navigate websites that are available only in Finnish. It's useful to install Google Translate app on your phone during your stay in Finland.

When renting from the private market, you can find different types of houses at different prices. **All rental agreements made by private renters are different** because private renters have the freedom to decide how to charge the utility costs (meaning, if including them in the rent price or not). Also, some apartments might be furnished, others might be unfurnished, and you will need to

buy your own furniture and household items. Find more information about where to buy these items in the section below “About Kouvola”.

When renting from a private renter **you might be responsible of creating your own electricity and internet contracts** (More info below in “Examples of internet and electricity providers”). Water may also not be included in the rent price, and may be charged as a fixed monthly fee or by usage. Always remember to ask the renter about these extra costs, while choosing your new accommodation. Many renters also might require **home insurance** from you and might want a **credit check** as well.

Depending on the area, here some example of accommodation prices from private renters in Kouvola:

- 1 room apartment (studio): 350-500€
- 2 rooms apartment (1 bedroom): 500-700€
- 3 rooms apartment (2 bedrooms): 600-800€

*Note: **Finland (as most of the Nordic countries) is an expensive country to live in.***

Accommodation is one of the biggest expenses you will face monthly. Living in Kouvola is more affordable compared to living in bigger cities such as Helsinki. Find more info about the topic in the section “Example living cost in Kouvola” in the next pages.

If necessary, Airbnb and Booking.com can also be considered for short-term accommodation – i.e. temporary accommodation in the beginning of the studies, while looking for a long-term accommodation:

- [Airbnb](#)
- [booking.com](#)

3. Examples of main providers of electricity and internet

Electricity

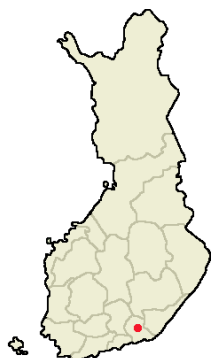
- KSS Energia - local provider in Kouvola: [KSS Energia](#) (to make a contract, call the customer service number: 05 885 1830)
- Fortum: [fortum.fi](#)
- Helen: [Helen](#)
- Väre: [vare.fi](#)
- Oomi: [Oomi](#)

Internet

- Elisa: [elisa.fi/asiakaspalvelu/en](#)
- Telia: [telia.fi/english](#)
- DNA: [dna.fi](#)

To create a contract with any of the service providers, it´s advised to call their customer services numbers.

Welcome to Kouvola



Official Kouvola city website: [The City of Kouvola](https://www.kouvola.fi)

1. Travelling to Kouvola from Helsinki Airport

You can travel easily from Helsinki Airport to Kouvola **by train**.

Helsinki Airport has a train station located right under the terminals. From the arrivals hall, take the escalator or elevator to go downstairs, where the train station is located.

Find the timetables and purchase your train **ticket** from the national train company VR [vr.fi](https://www.vr.fi) or from the mobile app. Remember to buy your ticket in advance and before getting on the train. Vending machines are also available at the airport train station, where you can purchase your train ticket with a card payment.

To reach Kouvola, you will first need to take a commuter train to Tikkurila (Lähijuna P) and after that a long-distance train to Kouvola.

Note: When buying a train ticket between Helsinki airport to Kouvola from VR online shop or app, you will automatically buy two train tickets (Helsinki airport-Tikkurila and Tikkurila-Kouvola) in the same purchase.

The **first train ticket** is valid for local trains (HSL) that run between Helsinki airport-Tikkurila within max. 80 min before the long-distance train to Kouvola. This means, you can take any **“Lähijuna P” (Helsinki airport-Tikkurila)** that runs within max 80 min before your selected long-distance train to Kouvola. To make your journey to Kouvola a bit more relaxed, we recommend taking an earlier “Lähijuna P” train from airport (if possible) and wait comfortably at Tikkurila for the train to Kouvola. There are shops and restaurants in Tikkurila train station, where you can grab a coffee and snack for the next train trip. “Lähijuna P” trains run around every 20 minutes from Helsinki airport. You can check local trains timetables here: [HSL.fi](https://hsl.fi)

Note: when travelling on any type of train, remember to always have the train ticket with you during the whole trip, as you might need to show it to the ticket inspector on request.

The **second train ticket is, instead, valid only for the selected long-distance train between Tikkurila-Kouvola** showed on your train ticket.

Note: On long-distance trains, passengers always travel on allocated seats. After entering the train, look for your seat number (you can find it on the train ticket) and always sit in the allocated seat.

We recommend buying the ticket as early as possible, as trains can get fully booked and train tickets get more expensive the closer to the departure. Usually, long distance train tickets price is not a fixed amount but changes depending on how early you buy it. The earlier you buy the tickets, the cheapest the ticket prices.

Travelling from Helsinki Airport to Kouvola will take you approximately 2 hours. To make your travelling experience smooth, we recommend downloading the VR app on your phone. It is possible to travel without downloading the VR app on the phone, but if you have it, you can comfortably

check from your phone from which the train track your train leaves, all the train stops in your journey and live information about possible delays and cancellations.

If your flight arrives in Helsinki during the evening time, it's recommended to spend the night in Helsinki and travel to Kouvola the next day.

2. Getting to places around Kouvola

If you live near the center, it is possible to **walk** around the city. All the important places are reachable within walking distance. When walking around the city, always be aware of the others around you (cars, bikes, scooters, etc.). During the wintertime and in the dark, make yourself visible by wearing reflectors. Wear anti-slip accessories when the roads are icy. Always walk in the pedestrians' designated paths and cross the road on the zebras. More tips here: [Pedestrians in traffic - Liikenneturva](#)

You can easily move around the city by using **local buses**. You can check the busses timetable at: [Kouvolan reittiopas](#) and [Bussiaikataulut ja -reitit - Kouvolan kaupunki](#). You can buy a ticket directly on the bus (in cash only) or with digital payment on the Waltti app. It's recommend downloading the **Waltti app** on your phone or buying a physical bus card from the local service point at the address Torikatu 2, 45100 Kouvola. You can also order a bus card independently and load your card from the Waltti website: [Waltti web shop](#).

*Note: When waiting for the bus at the bus stop, **wave** at your bus when you see it coming, to indicate to the bus driver to stop and pick you up. Waiving it's enough to sign to the bus driver to stop. Do not run in the middle of the road in any circumstances, it's not necessary and it's dangerous. When the bus drives near your destination, ring the **stop bell** next to your seat to indicate to the bus driver to stop in the next bus stop. Very often, busses don't stop at every single bus stop if not requested. When exiting the bus, it is common sense to thank the bus driver for the service by saying "Kiitos!".*

During the summertime and months with good weather, it's also possible to move around the city with **e-scooters** [JoeScooter](#) or **city bikes** [Donkey Republic](#). Download the apps on your phone and move around the city freely without having to stick to the bus schedules.

Bikes are a very used means of transportation in Finland. People in Finland love to use bikes to move around the city because it's easy, fast, and environmental-friendly. You can buy your own bike new from shops or you can get a cheaper one from physical or online secondhand shops. More info about the topic in the next pages, in section below "Driving in Finland".

If you would like to use a **taxi**, you can call Kymenlaakson taksi services by calling the number 0100 87227 (the service charges a small fee) or use the app free of charge. For more info visit: [Kymenlaakson Taksi](#).

3. Shopping in Kouvola

Kouvola has different options when it comes to shopping.

Below, you will find a list of options grouped by category. If you open the links, you can start familiarizing with the online shops of the different brands, check the different availabilities and prices of the products in Finland.

Grocery shopping:

- Kcitymarket, Ksupermarket, Kmarket - [Tuotteet | K-Ruoka Verkkokauppa](#)
- Prisma, Smarket, Sale - [Prisma – Hyvä mutta halpa](#)
- Lidl (discount retailer)- [Lidl Suomi](#)

Note: In bigger sized grocery shops in Finland you may find, not only food but also clothes, electronics, household items, sport equipment and much more.

Shopping center Veturi:

Veturi is the biggest shopping center in Kouvola. In Veturi, you can find a big variety of shops with many options for clothes, accessories, house decorations, hobby, sport equipment, etc. You can also find different restaurants, cafeterias, a grocery shop, a bookstore, a movie theater, hairdressers, pharmacy and more.

Shopping center Veturi is located only 3,5Km from city center. There is a bus stop in front of the shopping center. You can reach Veturi by bus from the city center with the bus number 1 or 7.

Find more info at Veturi website: [Kauppakeskus Veturi](https://www.kauppakeskusveturi.fi/).

Secondhand shops (near the city center)

- Goodwill: Kartanokatu 12, 45150 Kouvola
- Fida: Torikatu 4, 45100 Kouvola
- Centtilä: Sepänkatu 9, 45130 Kouvola

Buying secondhand is a great choice, especially when buying starter items on a budget (such as furniture, beddings, kitchen utensils and clothes). You can find other secondhand shops around the city.

Note: Secondhand shopping culture is very popular in Finland. You can buy from both physical flea markets (kirpputori) or online markets like "Tori" ([Tori.fi](https://tori.fi/)) or "facebook market".

Winter gear/outdoor clothes

- Second-hand shops
- Budget Sport: Veturi - [Budget Sport](#)
- Intersport: Veturi - [Intersport](#)
- Luhta: Veturi - [Luhta.com](#) and [Luhta Outdoor Store](#)
- Sportringen Outlet: Väkeväнкуja 1, 45700 Kouvola - [Sportringen Outlet](#)

Furniture, small house supplies and house decorations

- Second-hand shops
- Jysk: Katajajarjuntie 4, 45720 Kouvola – [JYSK.fi](#)
- Rusta: Katajajarjuntie 4 B, 45720 Kouvola – [Rusta-tavaratalot](#)
- Hintakaari: Kaupinkatu 11, 45130 Kouvola - [Hintakaari Kouvola](#)

Electronics

- Power: Katajajarjuntie 4, 45720 Kouvola - [Power.fi](#)

Pharmacies (near the city center)

- Hansa Apteekki: Keskikatu 4, 45100 Kouvola
- Valtarin Apteekki: Kouvolaankatu 15, 45100 Kouvola
- Kouvola Uusi Apteekki: Kouvolaankatu 22, 45100 Kouvola

Note: in Finland, you can buy basic medicines like vitamins, painkillers, and flu treatments from the pharmacy without a prescription. For other types of stronger medicines, you will need to first visit a doctor and get a prescription. The pharmacist will give you the right medicine only after checking the doctor prescription.

Other

- Tokmanni: variety discount retailer (food, clothes, hobbies, small furniture, hygiene products, etc.) – [Tokmanni.fi](https://tokmanni.fi)
- R-kioski: convenience store for smaller purchases (take away coffee, snacks, cigarettes, etc.) - [R-kioski](https://r-kioski.fi)

4. Example living costs in Kouvola

Below, some examples of **monthly** expenses in Kouvola. Please note, the expenses are just an **estimate** and have been calculated for one person living in a small apartment.

- Rent: 250-750€
- Bus card: 40€
- Grocery: 150-200€
- Phone internet connection: 20-30€
- Home internet connection (if not included in the rent): 20-40€
- Electricity (if not included in the rent, depends on usage): 30€
- Water (if not included in the rent, depends on usage): 20-30€
- Basic house insurance (if not included in the rent and depending on the m²): 20€
- Extras (clothing, free time activities, travelling, etc.): 100€
- (Unexpected expenses: 100€)

5. Free time activities in Kouvola

Xamk Integration activities

You are very welcome to participate in all the activities and events organized by **Xamk Integration Team** throughout your studies. The Integration Team organizes different types of activities and events related to well-being, employability, and integration of the international students in Finland and in the area.

For more info, please contact the integration coordinator assigned to your campus. Kouvola campus: claudia.riva@xamk.fi.

Things to do in Kouvola:

- Indoor sports (gyms, yoga, swimming halls, ice skating, ice hockey, bowling, badminton, etc.)
- Restaurants, bars, cafeterias
- Museums, theater, movie theater, library
- Public parks and beach for a picnic
- Public playgrounds for kids
- Outdoor sports (i.e. frisbee golf, football, Finnish baseball, skiing, etc.)

Near the city center:

- Gyms: fitness24seven.com, [EasyFit](https://easyfit.fi), [LadyLine](https://ladyline.fi) (for women only).

Note: Usually, gyms in Finland have a smaller exercise room for women only, and a bigger room where both men and women can exercise in a shared space.

- Bowling hall: happybowling.fi
- Swimming hall: [Urheilupuiston uimahalli](https://urheilupuistonuimahalli.fi)
- Theater: [Kouvola Teatteri](https://kouvola.teatteri.fi)
- Museums: [Poikilo-museot](https://poikilo-museot.fi), [Kouvola Tube Radio Museum](https://kouvola.tubemuseum.fi),

- Ice hockey hall: [KooKoo](#)
- Playgrounds for kids: [Leikkipaikat - Kouvolan kaupunki](#)
- Outdoor activities: Urheilupuisto (Palomäenkatu 23, 45100 Kouvola): frisbeegolf park, skating park, small free outdoor gym.

Places to visit in Kouvola:

- Tykkimäki Amusement Park and Aquapark - [tykkimaki.fi](#)
- Tykkimäki Sauna - [tykkimaensauna.fi](#)
- UNESCO World Heritage Site Verla (former cardboard factory) – [Verla Museum](#)
- Forest Park Arboretum Mustila - [Home | Mustila](#)
- Repovesi National Park - [Visitrepovesi.fi](#)
- Mielakka Bike Park and Skiing center - [Mielakka](#)

More info at:

- Digital map of Kouvola: [MAP OF THE KOUVOLA CITY CENTRE](#)
- Official website: [VisitKouvola](#)

6. Looking for a job in Kouvola

Looking for a job in Kouvola or generally in Finland can be a **long process**, not only for foreigners but for Finnish people too. It's important to keep in consideration that finding a job in Kouvola can be a lengthy process, but not impossible. Please do not expect to find a job right after your arrival to the country.

To speed up a bit the process, you can start having a look to the links below already now:

- [infoFinland](#) website provides information related to different topics of working life in Finland, such as CV and job application, employee's rights and responsibilities, and taxation.
- With [JobMarket Finland](#)'s tips you can get familiar with the job seeking process in Finland.
- [Résumé or CV | Eilakaisla](#) – tips for making a good CV.
- [Canva](#) has a broad selection of CV templates, also in the free-of-cost version.

Speaking Finnish is a crucial point when looking for a job in Finland. Learning and practicing Finnish language in your free time is highly recommended.

Also note that in Finland, if you want to do certain jobs that require food handling and work on food premises (such as restaurant waiter, kitchen worker, cook, barista and so on), you must obtain a Hygiene Passport beforehand. To obtain a Hygiene Passport you must pass a national test. The average price for the test is around 50€. If serving alcohol is involved in the tasks of your job, an Alcohol Passport is also required. More info here: [Hygiene Passport - Finnish Food Authority \(ruokavirasto.fi\)](#).

*Note: As a student, you are expected to **focus mainly on studies**.*

However, if you move to Finland with a spouse, your spouse might be allowed to work in Finland (depending on the type of residence permit obtained).

7. Learning Finnish in Kouvola

- Xamk Open University Pulse – Free of charge Basic Finnish course: [Beginners' Finnish 1-2 ECTS cr - Xamk](#) . Check the rest of the course offer: [Course calendar - Xamk](#)
- Kouvolan Ilta-lukio – [Suomen kielen kurssit - Finnish courses](#)
- Kansalaisopisto - [Kouvolan kansalaisopisto](#)

- Valkeala School – [Valkealanopisto](#)

*Note: Some of the courses are organized in person during daytime, which are not convenient as they might overlap with your classes in Xamk. Participation to the classes in Xamk should be your priority. Please check this carefully when choosing a language course. However, if you have moved in Finland with your spouse, these types of courses are a great chance for them to learn Finnish language. **Your studies in Xamk will most likely also include Finnish language studies.***

8. Services for immigrants in Kouvola

Link to the services: [Integration Services - The City of Kouvola](#)

Immigrant guidance and counseling MOONA

MOONA offers guidance and counselling for Immigrants for everyday problems and directs to the right authority if more in-depth counseling is needed. The services are free of charge.

At MOONA, you can receive guidance on, for example, residence permits, citizenship, social and health care, municipal services, education, working life, housing, leisure time, guidance on filling in forms, guidance on digitization.

More info about the services and opening hours: [MOONA - Kouvolan kaupunki](#) , [MOONA Kouvola - Facebook](#)

Contact: moona@kouvola.fi – Address: Kauppalankatu 13, 45100 Kouvola

Multicultural Center SAAGA

SAAGA is an international meeting place in Kouvola city center. It´s a shared living room, where you can find free time activities and meet new people from whole around the world. In SAAGA you can practice Finnish language, learn new languages and you might even get a chance to meet someone that speaks your native language too. SAAGA also organizes many different free time activities, trips and events.

Opening hours: Mon-Fri from 10 am to 5 pm.

More info: [Monikulttuurikeskus SAAGA - Facebook](#) , [@monikulttuurikeskussaaga - Instagram](#)

Contact: info@visitsaaga.fi – Address: Kouvolaankatu 14, 45100 Kouvola

9. Important addresses in Kouvola

- Hospital Ratamokeskus: Ruskeasuonkatu 3, 45100 Kouvola
- Private Health Centers:
 - Mehiläinen - Kauppamiehenkatu 4, 45100 Kouvola
 - Pihlajalinna - Hallituskatu 7 D, 45100 Kouvola
 - Terveystalo - Kouvolaankatu 20 B, 45100 Kouvola
 - Synlab - Kouvolaankatu 3, 45100 Kouvola
- Digital and Population Data Services Agency DVV: Valimontie 5, 45100 Kouvola
- Police Station: Vuorikatu 1, 45100 Kouvola
- Multicultural Center SAAGA: Kouvolaankatu 14, 45100 Kouvola
- Immigrant guidance and counseling MOONA: Kauppalankatu 13, Kouvola, Finland
- Kouvola City Hall: Torikatu 10, 45100
- Kuovi Family Park (for open childhood education): Lohitie 9, 45160 Kouvola

- Kouvola Asunnot: Kauppamiehenkatu 4, 45100 Kouvola

Living in Finland

1. Welcome to Finland!

Find general information about moving to Finland, housing, education, health, family, leisure and more, at the website: [Your guide for living in Finland \(infofinland.fi\)](https://infofinland.fi)

Finland in short:

- “Land of a thousand lakes”: there are around 188,000 lakes. Finland is one of the countries with the **cleanest water** in the world. It is safe to swim almost everywhere, except in the warmest months if the blue-green algae start spreading. **Tap water is also clean and drinkable.**
- Around 75% of the Finnish territory is covered with forests. In Finland, people have a deep connection with nature and always show respect to it. Nature is always around the corner (even in the bigger cities) and it´s a right of everyone to have easy access to it. **When spending time in the nature, do not be loud and leave the place how you found it, bring your trash back home or to the nearest trash bin.**
- The **4 seasons** in Finland:
 - Winter - *Talvi* (December to February). **Winters in Finland are cold and dark.** It is possible to see the majestic northern lights in Lapland (northern part of Finland). It is also possible to see them in the south, but it´s a rarer phenomenon. In the winter, temperatures are often below 0°C, as low as -30°C. The sun rises late in the mornings and goes down very early. On a typical winter day, you will leave your house to go to school in the dark, see the sun coming up from the window and come back home from your school day again in the dark. Because of the lack of light, our bodies can´t get enough vitamin D from the sun during the winter. Vitamin D deficiency can cause osteoporosis, immunodeficiency, and elevated risk for autoimmune diseases. It is absolutely necessary to **take vitamin D supplements** during the winter. Darkness can also affect mental health for some people. Use lots of small indoor source of light in the house (like candles or string lights) and **try to keep yourself busy**: start new hobbies, spend time with your friends, participate to events, explore new places, meet new people, try out winter sports. Winter in Finland can be harsh, but it´s possible to live your normal life during these months too. The first winter in Finland can be shocking for foreigners, but you will get used to the weather with time. If you need help or just want to have a chat with someone, you are always welcome to visit the international §office!
 - Celebrations: Independence Day - *Itsenäisyyspäivä*, Christmas - *Joulu*, New Year´s Day - *Uudenvuodenpäivä*, Epiphany – *Loppiainen*.
 - Spring - *Kevät* (March to May). The weather is still quite cold, and days are getting every day a bit brighter. Days are getting slowly warmer, and the ice starts melting. **Watch out for thin ice!** It is very dangerous to walk on frozen waters if the ice is too thin, as it might break under your feet, and you could fall in the iced cold waters. Around April time, the snow starts melting, nature starts becoming greener and flowers start blossoming.
 - Celebrations: Easter - *Pääsiäinen*, May Day – *Vappu*.
 - Summer - *Kesä* (June to August). The weather gets warmer (average 20°C), days and nights are bright. The summer solstice (Midsummer) signs the brightest day of the year. After that, day light starts getting every day a little shorter again. Sleeping

during the summer can be challenging as it's light during most of the nighttime. Finnish people **use blinders or black curtains** in their bedrooms, to help making the room darker during the night.

Please note that Finnish people usually use their work holidays during the summertime, generally from Midsummer on until end of July. Students have a quite long summer break from school too!

Celebrations: Midsummer - *Juhannus*.

- Autumn - *Syksy* (September to November). Days are getting everyday a bit darker, and the weather is often windy and rainy. The leaves on the trees turn yellow, orange, and red, creating the typical beautiful and colorful landscapes of *Ruska*. Please note that autumn in Finland can be very cold as well. End of October – November might require you to already use your winter jacket. Watch out for the first ice of the season (roads **can be slippery**) and always wear **reflectors** in the dark!

Celebrations: All Saints' Day – *Pyhäinpäivä*,

- Finland is a country based on **honesty, equality, and respect of human rights**. In Finland, all people have the same rights. You are expected to be honest and respect the rules.
- Finns enjoy a **peaceful and calm lifestyle**. They can seem very quiet and introverted, but when you manage to break the ice with them, they are usually very relaxed, honest, direct, and polite people. Being **punctual** is always expected! Finnish people are also huge coffee lovers, making Finland one of the countries with the highest coffee consumption in the world.
- **Sauna** is a big part of Finnish culture. There are over 3 million saunas in the country - more than cars! [Quick guide to Finnish sauna etiquette | My Helsinki](#)
- Learning **Finnish language** is essential if you want to live in the country for a long time. However, almost everyone understands and speaks English in Finland, even if they might be shy using the language. There are several online and in person courses that you can take to learn Finnish. For example, you can download the Duolingo app on your phone (free of charge) [Duolingo– Google Play](#) or look for video lessons on YouTube.
- Finland has been ranking for several years in a row as the **happiest country** in the world, thanks to its values, such as safety, equality, social supports, and low corruption. But at a price! Finland is also **one of the most expensive countries to live in Europe**.
- The **emergency number in Finland is 112**. Call this number if you find yourself in an emergency type of situation and you need help from police, firefighters or you need to call an ambulance.

2. How to dress in Finland?

Winter

When coming for the first time to Finland, many people might have never experienced snow and cold temperatures. For this reason, they might not be aware of how to dress properly for the cold winters in this country.

When dressing up in the winter, there is mainly two rules: **wear warm clothes** and **dress in layers** to protect yourself from the cold.

In the coldest days it's important to wear all the layers:

- Layer 1: Base layer of long/thermal underwear for upper and lower body, socks.
- Layer 2: Wool sweaters or fleece hoodies, pants, wool socks.
- Layer 3: Warm waterproof winter jacket, outdoor waterproof pants, warm gloves, warm beanie, warm scarf, warm waterproof shoes and reflector.

Watch these two videos to learn more: [How to dress for winter - YouTube](#) and [Yle Oulu | Facebook](#).

The amount of clothes also depends on how long you will need to be outdoor and how active you will be.

*Note: Walking on fresh snow is very safe but **be careful when walking on the ice as it can be very slippery!** You can buy ice grippers to attach under your shoes during these days. **Always remember to remove the ice grippers when entering indoor,** as they are designed for outdoor use, and they can ruin indoor floors.*



Spring

In the springtime, the sun starts shining again in the sky and the temperatures start rising. In the end of the spring, it's time to put your winter jacket back in the closet and say goodbye until the end of the autumn. Streets are usually covered in wet melting snow and good waterproof shoes are essential when walking outdoor.

Note: Temperatures in the nighttime can still go below zero and will freeze the snow that just melted during the day. As a result, this becomes very slippery to walk on, be careful!

Summer

In the summer, temperatures stay around 20°C and the warmest month is usually July. When the sun shines it can get very warm in Finland too! You can finally wear summer dresses, t-shirts and shorts, but always remember to have a light sweater or light jacket for the evenings or rainy days.

Autumn

In the autumn you enjoy the last sunshine before the winter. Autumn can be a very muddy and wet season too. It's good to wear rubber boots and a raincoat during these months. As temperatures start going down again, it's time to bring the sweaters out from the closet, especially for the mornings and evenings.

In Finland, **the weather changes really fast** and some days, you could even be able to experience all the four seasons in the same day! It's important for you and all your family members in Finland with you (including the little ones) to always be prepared for the change of weather when spending time outdoors. In Finland, when kids are in daycare or in school, they spend a lot of time outdoors during all the 4 seasons, no matter what type of weather the day has to offer. Find some tips about **how to dress children in Finland** here: [How do you weather proof children in Finland? Yle Uutiset](#)

*Note: In Finland, like in many other Nordic countries, there is a saying:
"There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing".*

3. What to pack in the luggage?

Essentials to pack in your luggage:

- ☒ All required documents to enter the country (passport, residence permit, etc.).
- ☒ All the documents used to apply to the studies. **Copies are not accepted.**
- ☒ Private insurance policy (if you have/need one).
- ☒ Vaccinations certificates.
- ☒ PC with charger for your studies (studying in Xamk requires the use of a computer).
- ☒ Headset for possible online classes or tasks.
- ☒ Plug adapter for type F or C sockets (if needed).



- ☑ Phone with list of emergency contacts saved on it.
- ☑ Power bank (not compulsory).
- ☑ Some basic medicines.
- ☑ Some cash and your bank card (payments in Finland are done mostly cashless). Visa and Mastercard are the most accepted. Make sure to not have any block preventing you from using your card abroad.
- ☑ Clothes depending on the arrival season. You can always buy more clothes after arriving to Finland.
- ☑ Basic hygiene products and other personal belongings.
- ☑ Basic house essentials - such as one set of bed sheets, pillow cover, duvet cover, a towel. No need to overpack, just the essentials to live until buying the rest in Finland.

4. Basic Finnish

| English | Finnish |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Hello | Moi |
| Goodbye/See you | Näkemiin |
| Bye | Moi moi |
| Sorry/Excuse me | Anteeksi |
| Yes | Kyllä |
| No | Ei |
| Thank you | Kiitos |
| You're welcome | Ole hyvä |
| How are you? | Mitä kuuluu? |
| Good | Hyvää |
| Welcome | Tervetuloa |
| Exit | Ulos |
| I don't understand | En ymmärrä |
| I don't speak Finnish | En puhu suomea |
| Do you speak English? | Puhutko englantia? |
| I'm going to Kouvola | Minä menen Kouvolaan |
| Where is the train station? | Missä rautatieasema on? |
| Train | Juna |
| Bus | Bussi |
| Ticket | Lippu |
| I am a student | Minä olen opiskelija |

5. Coming to Finland with your kid?

Visit the local Neuvola with your child

If you move to Finland with your kid, it is strongly recommended to be in contact with the local **Neuvola** for guidance on children healthcare. Neuvola is a Child Health Center for maternity, family, and children health services, where you can receive advice about kids' healthcare in Finland. At Neuvola, the workers are monitoring and promoting the physical, mental, and social condition of children under school age, giving vaccinations, and supporting parents in providing secure, child-focused rearing, care and in attending to relationships. Neuvola promotes healthy growing

environments for children and healthy family lifestyles. If special support is needed, the family will be referred to a specialist. All services provided are free of charge.

Find more information about Neuvola at this link: [Maternity and child health clinics - Ministry of Social Affairs and Health \(stm.fi\)](https://maternityandchildhealthclinics.fi/)

To find your local Neuvola call the general regional **phone number +35852202100** (Kouvola, Kotka, Hamina) during Monday to Thursday 7am-3pm or Friday 7am-1pm. You will be put on hold as generally there is a queue of people calling there. Please wait in line until someone answers. When a worker answers, book a time and ask to indicate the address of the Neuvola you are supposed to visit, based on your home address.

General info about the Finnish School System

In Finland, compulsory education is between age 6 to 18 years old. **All kids living in Finland and aged 6-18 years old must go to school.**

The Finnish education system consists of:

1. *Early childhood education and care* (daycare) provided for children before the compulsory education begins (age: 9 months – 5 years old).
2. *Pre-primary education* for 1 year (age: 6 years old).
3. *Nine years of primary and lower secondary education* - basic compulsory education/comprehensive school, (age: from 7 years old).
4. *Upper secondary education*, which is either general upper secondary education or vocational education and training. Compulsory education ends when the student reaches 18 years old or complete the upper secondary education.
5. *Higher education* provided by universities and universities of applied sciences.

You need to **fill an application** for all types of schools/daycare to receive a study place for your child. Usually, you will be allocated to the **nearest school** depending on your home address and availability. The handling of the application might take up to **4 months**, so it's important to start the paperwork as early as possible and as soon as you know your home address in Finland.

Info about schools in Kouvola

General information about day care and schools in Kouvola: [Day Care and Schools - City of Kouvola](https://kouvolan.fi/en/day-care-and-schools)

- **Early childhood education:** A child has the right to early childhood education from the age of 9 months until the start of school. You have to **apply for an early childhood education place four months before** the desired start of the service. Early childhood education is organized in Kouvola in the city's kindergartens and family daycare, as well as in private kindergartens. You can apply for an early childhood education place either electronically or with a form, more information: [Hakeminen varhaiskasvatukseen - Kouvolan kaupunki](https://kouvolan.fi/en/hakeminen-varhaiskasvatukseen).

The fee for early childhood education is charged according to the family's income. The kids in early childhood education get offered children meals for the day, free of charge. For this reason, it is important to indicate the child's special diets and allergies already in the application. More information about customer fees for early childhood education: [Varhaiskasvatustsmaksut - Kouvolan kaupunki](https://kouvolan.fi/en/varhaiskasvatustsmaksut).

Every child must participate in **preschool** one year before starting school, i.e. at the age of 6. Preschool education is organized in kindergartens and a few schools. You must register for preschool education. More information about preschool education can be found at: [Esiopetus - Kouvolan kaupunki](https://kouvolan.fi/en/esiopetus).

In addition to daycare and family daycare, the city of Kouvola organizes **open early childhood education**, which is open to all families with children. The service is free of charge and offers versatile indoor and outdoor activities in various parts of Kouvola. The child can participate to the activities together with a parent, grandparent, or other close

adult. The child gets the opportunity to play and learn together with other children and adults can meet each other, get peer support, parenting support and service guidance. More information about the activities can be found at: www.kouvola.fi/avoinvarhaiskasvatus

Links to the application forms:

- form for daycare application: [Päivähoitohakemus \(kouvola.fi\)](http://Päivähoitohakemus(kouvola.fi)),
- form for preschool application: [Ilmoittautuminen esiopetukseen \(kouvola.fi\)](http://Ilmoittautuminen esiopetukseen(kouvola.fi)) .

- **Basic compulsory education:** A student with an immigrant background is first directed to **preparatory education**. The goal of preparatory education is to **promote the student's Finnish language skills, help the integration into the Finnish society, and to provide the necessary skills for basic education**. Preparatory teaching is organized for approximately one academic year of study in different parts of the city. In the final phase of the preparatory education, the student's grade level is examined. After that, a decision is given on the choice of the nearby school in which the student will be transferred to, to continue the studies.

Children of primary school age (1st-2nd grade) are directed directly to the **flexible pre-primary and primary education group** of their own local school or they can also be directed to a preparatory teaching group. The situation is examined on a student-by-student basis, taking the child's best interests into account. Primary school-aged children normally follow the curriculum of preparatory education also in the group of flexible pre-primary and primary education.

A 16-year-old is directed to **preparatory education for basic education** unless he has a certificate equivalent to a certificate of completion of basic education. If he already has a certificate equivalent of completion of a basic school, he will be directed to other educations.

Link to the application form for basic education: [Preliminary information form for preparatory instruction](#)

Compulsory education in Finland is free of charge.

Please, notify the daycare center or school in case you move out from Kouvola and you will not need the service anymore.

*Note: If you have any doubts about your child education in Kouvola, you can **find the right contact person by opening the links shared above. The Immigrant guidance and counseling MOONA (moona@kouvola.fi) also offers support related to the matter and filling application forms.** When your kid starts school, you might be required to show a proof of **vaccinations**. Bring all the necessary documents with you when moving to Finland.*

After arrival to Finland

After your arrival to Kouvola, there might be some days before the beginning of your classes at campus. Use this time to **get familiar with the place**, travel around the city and get to know places and things to do.

During this time, you should:

- ✓ visit the city.
- ✓ get familiar with public transportation and/or buy your own bike if you wish to have one.
- ✓ practice how to find the bus schedules.
- ✓ get a bus card (if you wish to have one).
- ✓ get a Finnish sim card for your phone (if necessary).
- ✓ learn how to arrive to Xamk Kouvola Campus.
- ✓ participate to the orientation week at campus.
- ✓ register at the DVV office.

Find the information related to local busses and living in Kouvola in the previous pages, in the section "Welcome to Kouvola".

Register at the DVV office

After moving to Finland, it's necessary to register at the **DVV office**. You will need to:

1. Step 1: **Fill the right online form** available on DVV website: [As a foreigner in Finland | Digital and population data services agency](#).
2. Step 2: Book an appointment from the DVV website (if needed).
3. Step 3: Complete the registration procedure by **visiting the DVV office in person**. When visiting the office, remember to bring with you all the required documents.

DVV Kouvola office:

Address: Valimontie 5 – 7, 45100 Kouvola

Opening hours: Wed 13:00 - 16:00 Fri 9:30 - 16:00 with appointment.

Wed 9:00 - 12:00 without an appointment.

Getting a Finnish sim card for your phone

Your stay in Finland because of the studies will most likely be quite long. If your sim card is not working in Finland, it's wise to get a Finnish phone number, to be able to use internet connection and make calls in the country. You can buy a **prepaid** sim card at **R-kioski**. Depending on the type of offer, the average price for a prepaid can be 5-35€. With a pre-paid, you can charge an amount of money on the sim card and use it according to the chosen offer, until the credit runs out and so on.

More info: [Prepaid-liittymät / R-kioski](#).

For Xamk new international students, Elisa provides a starter kit that includes a prepaid SIM card with 6€ of credit (enough for approximately six days of data usage). You will receive your Elisa starter kit, along with instructions, from your integration coordinator at the beginning of your studies.

Monthly subscriptions are also offered. However, as you are creating a phone contract, you might fulfill certain requirements and be asked for a reliable financial statement, valid ID and other documents. Here a list of phone operators in Finland:

1. Elisa: elisa.fi/asiakaspalvelu/en
2. Telia: telia.fi/english
3. DNA: dna.fi

Opening a bank account

Opening a bank account in Finland might be trickier than in other countries. If you or a family member that moved to Finland with you have the need to open a bank account in Finland, note that you will need to fulfill certain requirements and you will be asked for several documents including residence permit and Finnish Social Security Number. The requirements may vary slightly depending on the bank and you can familiarise yourself with these guidelines by visiting the banks websites.

Examples of the most common banks that operate in Finland are: Nordea, S-pankki, Danske Bank, Säästöpankki, Osuuspankki, etc.

Coming to Xamk Kouvola Campus

Xamk Kouvola campus is located only around 2km away from the city center (approx. **25 min walk**). There is also a bus connection (**bus 14**) between the center and the campus.

Kouvola campus address: **Paraatikenttä 7, 45100, Kouvola.**

Check this Google Maps link to find your way to campus from Kouvola railway station: [XAMK, Kouvolan kampus – Google Maps](#).

Xamk Kouvola Campus map in the next page.

Kouvolan kampus – Kouvola Campus

PARAATIKENTTÄ 7, 45100 KOUVOLA



Kampuksen info palvelee pääsisäänkäynnin luona.
The Campus information desk is next to the main entrance.

AUDITORIOT JA KOKOUSTILAT CONFERENCE FACILITIES

Auditorio
Auditorium
5
Neuvottelutila
Conference Room
7/150
7/247
6/110
6/212

OPISKELIJAN PALVELUT, MUUT STUDENT SERVICES

7/125 Opintotoimisto
Student Affairs Office
7/134B Hakijapalvelut, opintotukiasiat
Admissions services
7/123 Kansainväliset palvelut
International Services
7/304 Opintopsykologi
Counselling Psychologist
7/132 Opiskelijakunta Kaakko
Student Union Kaakko

7/138 Opiskelijajyhdistykset
Student associations:
Klato ry, Kupla ry
7/143 Insider Student Magazine
7/252 IT-tuki
IT support
7/302, 303 Opiskeluterveydenhuolto
Student Health Care
7/304 Oppilaitospappi
The Campus Chaplain
6 Kampuskirjasto
Campus Library

RAVINTOLAT JA KAHVILAT RESTAURANTS & CAFES

1 Ravintola Paja
Restaurant Paja
5 Kasarmiravintola

OPPIMISYMPÄRISTÖT LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

1 Työpajat, näyttelytila
Project rooms, Paja Gallery
5/202, 203 Hoitoluokat, anatomia ja
terveydenhoitajien opiskelupisteet
Care classes, anatomy and study space
for nurses
4 Meduusa-studio, Rykmentintie 4
4 Taidetalo
Art house, Maneesitie 4

MUUT TOIMIJAT OTHER ACTORS

4 Kouvola Innovation Oy (Kinno)
5 Upseerikerho
The Officer's Club
9 Kouvola IT-Campus
Lappeenranta teknillisen yliopiston
Kouvolan yksikkö
Lappeenranta University of Technology,
LUT Kouvola



Main Building – where most of the classes and useful offices are located at.

Participate to the orientation at campus

The studies at campus will open with an orientation week. Please note that usually, the orientation is delivered in person at campus and attendance is compulsory. Remember, punctuality is always expected in Finland.

The orientation aims at introducing the studies, the campus services and studying environments. The exact timetable of the orientation depends on your study programme.