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Guidebook for new students



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Mikkeli

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WELCOME TO STUDY IN XAMK!

In this guidebook, you will find useful and necessary information for starting your studies at Xamk smoothly. Please read this guide carefully and feel free to have a second glance at it whenever needed!

BEFORE COMING TO FINLAND

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

- ✓ participate in the online orientation
- ✓ have all the required documents to enter the country
- ✓ have bought your flight ticket
- ✓ have booked accommodation
- ✓ have familiarised yourself with the travel to Mikkeli and the public transportation needed to reach your accommodation
- ✓ have packed all the documents used to apply to the foundation year programme
- ✓ have packed your luggage according to the climate
- ✓ have read and started all the necessary procedures described on page 15 in case you come to Finland with your children.

Online orientation

An online orientation is organised as a Teams meeting before the beginning of the studies. The online orientation is an opportunity to get information about practicalities related to arriving and settling in Finland and Mikkeli, and to meet each other. Participation in the online orientation is highly recommended.

Find the time of and the Teams link to your online orientation on Xamk's website: [Starting instructions for studies - Kaakkois-Suomen ammattikorkeakoulu Xamk](#).

Make sure to have all the required documents to enter Finland

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

Generally, non-EU students must obtain a residence permit to enter the country. The residence permit process might require several months, and you will need to obtain the permit before flying to Finland and starting your studies. Therefore, submit your residence permit application as soon as

possible after receiving the acceptance letter to the studies and confirmation of payment of the tuition fee. Make sure to meet all the requirements for your residence permit, such as valid passport, proof of finances, private health insurance, and so on. As part of the process, you will also be asked to personally visit a Finnish embassy or consulate for identification.

In Finland, most of the services nowadays 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 making an appointment in a public office, you will be offered the first available time in the calendar. Please do not hesitate to mention if the time offered does not align with your schedule: you will be offered a new time for your appointment.

It is necessary to obtain a travelling and health insurance before moving to Finland. As a student, you will be personally responsible for 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 your travel insurance includes liability coverage throughout the study period.

If also your family members are coming to Finland, please make sure to arrange necessary documentation for them as well. Notice that a family member of a student will be granted a residence permit on a different basis than studies, which means requirements and rights might be different. Read the information in Finnish Immigration Services website carefully to find out the process to follow for your family member.

Find more information about entering the country in [the Finnish Immigration Services website](#) and YouTube channel: [Applying for a residence permit in Finland \(youtube.com\)](#).

Health care for degree students is provided by FSHS

You can use FSHS services if you are studying for a Bachelor's or Master's degree and you have registered as an attending student. All information about the services and booking appointments is available on [FSHS website](#).

All students eligible for FSHS' services are also required to pay a university student health care fee to Kela. More detailed information related to the payment and instructions for payment can be found on [Kela's website](#).

Accommodation in Mikkeli

Accommodation arrangements are at student's responsibility. Therefore, students can freely choose what kind of accommodation suits best their needs. Finding the right accommodation is a process that can take some time which is why you should start looking for an accommodation as soon as you receive the confirmation of payment of the study fee. Therefore, you can start the application process for accommodation immediately.

It is important to find an accommodation and have it confirmed before arriving in Finland. Please note that housing companies have limited availabilities and existing waiting lists. Therefore, it is not possible to walk in the housing companies upon arrival, ask for accommodation and expect to get it on the same day.

Accommodation options in Mikkeli

Student accommodation and rental housing by Mikalo

Student accommodation in Mikkeli is provided by the housing company called [Mikalo](#). Mikalo offers accommodation for different needs, from shared rooms and small studios to family accommodation. Please find information such as how to apply and opening hours from Mikalo's website.

Housing locations closest to the campus and city centre: Nuijamies, Kaukola, Keskusta, Kiiskinmäki, Kirjala.

Private renters

One option is to rent from private market. Please read the apartment description as well as rental terms carefully before signing the contract, as they vary depending on the apartment.

Options where to find an apartment from a private renter:

[Oikotie.com – Mikkeli](#)

[Vuokraovi.com – Mikkeli](#)

[Vuokra-asunnot Mikkeli \(yksityiset \)\)](#): A Facebook group for offering and looking for private rental apartments in Mikkeli

Short-term accommodation

In case the apartment you have applied for is not available just yet by the time you arrive, booking short-term accommodation might be a good solution. You can check available accommodation options, for example, from [Booking.com](#) or [Airbnb](#).

Electricity and internet

Examples of electricity providers:

- [Oomi](#)
- [Fortum](#)
- [Helen](#)
- [Väre](#)

Examples of internet providers:

- [DNA](#)
- [Elisa](#)
- [Telia](#)

To create a contract with any of the service providers you need to call their customer service.

What to pack in the luggage?

Essentials to pack in your luggage:

- ☑ all required documents to enter the country (passport, residence permit, and so on)
- ☑ all the original documents you used to apply to your studies at Xamk
- ☑ private insurance policy
- ☑ vaccination certificates
- ☑ PC with charger for your studies (studying in Xamk requires the use of a computer)
- ☑ headset for possible online classes
- ☑ plug adapter for type F or C sockets (if needed)



- ☑ phone with a list of emergency contacts saved on it
- ☑ power bank (optional)
- ☑ basic medicines
- ☑ some cash and your bank card (payments in Finland are done mostly cashless). Visa and Mastercard are the most accepted. Make sure not to have any block preventing you from using your card abroad.
- ☑ proper clothes, shoes, and accessories
- ☑ basic hygiene products and other personal belongings
- ☑ basic house essentials, such as a set of bed sheets, pillow cover, duvet cover, a towel. There is no need to bring too many things, just enough to live until buying these items in Finland.

ARRIVING AND SETTLING IN MIKKELI

Travelling to Mikkeli from Helsinki airport

You can travel from Helsinki airport to Mikkeli by train. To make your travelling smooth, we recommend downloading the VR app on your phone. It is possible to travel without downloading the app. However, from the app you can check the track from where the train leaves, all the train

stops during your journey, and live information about possible delays and cancellations. In case you do not have the VR app, you can buy tickets via the VR website: [Single ticket – VR](#).

Remember to buy your ticket online in advance (before getting on the train). We recommend buying the ticket as early as possible since trains can get fully booked. Also, long-distance train ticket prices usually are not fixed so they change depending on how early you buy it, so the earlier you buy the tickets the cheaper the price will likely be. Tickets cannot be bought from the train and a fine may apply if you are travelling without a valid ticket.

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

Travelling from Helsinki airport to Mikkeli will take you approximately 3 hours.

If your flight arrives in Helsinki during the evening time, we recommend spending the night in Helsinki and travelling to Mikkeli the next day. Please note that we will not provide pick-up service from the airport or train station.

Getting around in Mikkeli

On foot

If you live near the city centre, it is possible to move around the city on foot. All the important places are within walking distance. Always walk in the pedestrians' designated paths and cross the road on the zebras. More tips can be found from the Finnish Road Safety Council's website: [Pedestrians in traffic - Liikenneturva](#).

By bike

Many people in Finland move around the city by bike throughout the year, winter included. In Mikkeli, you can buy a new bike from shops (such as Polkupyörä Etappi, Wauhtipyörä, Biltema, Tokmanni and Prisma) or find a cheaper one from a physical or online secondhand shop.

Wearing a helmet, having a functioning white or light-yellow headlight and a red rear light, functioning breaks, and a bell, are required by law when biking. Lights must be on in the dark. To make you even more visible, it is recommended to wear a safety reflective vest. For winter cycling you need warm outdoor clothes, a helmet, reflectors, and grippier tires to prevent sliding on the slippery ice.

If you wish to transport a child with the bike, you must take extra precautions on top of the ones

mentioned above. The bike must be fitted with two separate braking devices and the child must sit in a special child seat in the back of your bike or in a special trailer designed for bikes. The child must be under 135 cm and always use a seatbelt.

More information: [Safe cycling - Liikenneturva](#).

By local bus

You can move around the city by local bus. You can check the digital timetable at <https://mikkeli.digitransit.fi/>. Tickets can be bought directly on the bus or in the Waltti app. We recommend downloading Waltti app on your phone or buying a physical bus card from the local service point located in the main library at the address Raatihuoneenkatu 6 (check the opening hours from [the service point website](#)).

At the bus stop, wave at the bus when you see it coming to indicate to the bus driver to stop and pick you up. Waving is enough to let the bus driver know to stop. When you are close to your destination, ring the stop bell close to your seat for the bus driver to stop at the next bus stop. Usually, buses do not stop at every bus stop if not necessary or requested. When exiting the bus, thank the bus driver for the service by saying "Kiitos!".

By taxi

If you prefer to use a taxi there are, for example, the following taxi companies operating in Mikkeli: [Let's GO TAKSI](#), service number: 0600 300 55
[Menevä](#), service number: 080002120 / Menevä Taxi app.

By car

Check if you are allowed to drive in Finland with your current driving license: [Validity of foreign driving licences in Finland | Ajokortti-info](#). Also, make sure that all the required driving-related costs (such insurance, car inspection, and taxes) are up to date, since otherwise driving is not allowed.

In Finland, roads are usually wide and quite straight, which can make driving comfortable but also "boring" in longer travels. Therefore, if you are driving a long distance, always remember to take breaks. Also, use seatbelts, drive according to the speed limits, and keep the safety distance to other cars. The use of headlights at all times of the day is mandatory in Finland. It is illegal to drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

When driving in the winter conditions you must be extra careful the roads can be icy and slippery. Notice that you must use winter tires, the speed limits are lower, and it is necessary to start using the breaks early enough: as the roads are slippery, the car slides on the ice when hitting the breaks. Do not do fast last-minute stops with the car! Always keep an adequate distance with the car in the

front.

When you drive in the night or dark, incidents of moose or reindeer crossing the road and being struck by vehicles can happen. These accidents can cause severe damage to the vehicle and injuries to the people inside the car. Sometimes the accidents can even be fatal. If you end up in such accident or see someone in this situation, call the emergency number 112 and stop to help. Authorities will not only provide help to the people involved in the accident, but also take care of the injured animal. This also applies to other types of car accidents: if you see someone alone in difficulty, call 112 and stop to give assistance.

If you are driving with a small child, the child must stay inside a child seat. There are different types of child seats according to the age and height of the child. Everyone inside a car must fasten seatbelts while driving.

Traffic rules: [Do you know the rules of the road? - Finnish Road Safety Council \(liikenneturva.fi\)](#)

Road signs: [Road Signs - Finnish Transport Infrastructure Agency \(vayla.fi\)](#) Basic road rules: [In traffic - Liikenneturva](#)

Finnish Transport and Communication Agency: [Etusivu | Traficom](#)

Other modes of transportation

During the summertime and months with good weather, it is possible to move around the city with e-scooters: see [TIER](#) and [JoeScooter](#)'s websites.

Shops

Grocery shopping

- K-Citymarket, K-Supermarket, K-Market
- Prisma, S-market, Sale
- Lidl

In bigger-sized grocery shops you may not only find food but also clothes, electronics, household items, bikes and other sport equipment, and much more.

Shopping centres Akseli and Stella

Shopping centres Akseli and Stella are located next to each other in Hallituskatu street in the city centre. In Akseli and Stella you can find a variety of shops for clothing, accessories, sport equipment, and so on. There are also some restaurants, cafeterias, a grocery shop, a bookstore, hairdressers, pharmacy, and more.

Outdoor clothing, winter gear, and bikes

- **Stadium:** Shopping centre Stella
- **Intersport:** Maaherrankatu 24
- Second-hand shops
- Bikes: **Polkupyörä Etappi** (Poppelitie 26), **Wauhtipyörä** (Raatihuoneenkatu 7), but also, e.g., Tokmanni, Prisma and Biltema, and secondhand shops

Furniture, small house supplies and house decorations

- **JYSK:** Setrikatu 5
- **Masku:** Karikontie 5
- Secondhand shops

Secondhand shops

- **Ajaton** (the biggest secondhand shop in Mikkeli, approximately 4 km from the city centre): Kauppatie 13
- **ViaDia**, shops in the city centre: Savilahdenkatu 19, Vuorikatu 5

Secondhand shopping is popular in Finland. You can buy from both physical flea markets (kirpputori in Finnish) or online markets like “Tori” <https://tori.fi> or “Facebook market”. Buying secondhand is a great choice when buying starter items on a budget (such as furniture, beddings, kitchen utensils and clothes).

Electronics

- **Gigantti** (approximately 1,5 km from the city centre and 0,5 km from the campus): Yrittäjänkatu 4
- **Power** (approximately 2,5 km from the city centre): Graanintie 6

Pharmacies (apteekki in Finnish) nearby the city centre

- **Mikkelin I apteekki:** Porrassalmenkatu 21
- **Omega apteekki:** Shopping centre Akseli, Maaherrankatu 18-20
- **Apteekki Stella:** Shopping centre Stella: Porrassalmenkatu 20

In Finland, you can buy basic medicines like vitamins, painkillers, and flu treatments from the pharmacy without a prescription. For other types of medicines, you will need to visit a doctor and get a prescription. The pharmacist will need to check your prescription to give you the right medicine.

Other

- **Tokmanni** (e.g., food, clothing, hobbies, small furniture, hygiene products, bikes): Setrikatu 1
- **Rusta** (e.g., home decor, small home supplies, hygiene products): Setrikatu 2
- **Biltema** (bikes, car tools, household goods, tools, and more): Katajalahdentie 10
- **Motonet** (car tools, household goods and home decor, free time equipment, and more): Huuhkajankatu 2
- **R-kioski** (convenience store for smaller purchases (e.g., takeaway coffee, snacks, cigarettes): multiple locations, e.g., Porrassalmenkatu 14 in the city centre

Example living costs in Mikkeli

Important! Finland is a high-cost country. The minimum income requirement defined by the Finnish Immigration Service (Migri) does not necessarily cover all daily living expenses.

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

- Rent: 460-700 €
- Bus card for a month (zones A-B): 75 €
- Groceries: 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 home insurance (if not included in the rent and depending on the m²): 20 €
- Extras (such as clothing, free time activities, travelling): 100 €
- Unexpected expenses: 50 €

Monthly expenses can be significantly higher if you live with a spouse and/or with children.

Things to do in Mikkeli

Sports and outdoor activities

- Gyms: [Fitness 24/7](#), [Liikku](#), [Fressi](#)
- Campus gym: Building P, address: Teollisuuskatu 3–5
- Campus sports hall: on the first floor of Building D on campus.

Gyms in Finland may have a smaller exercise room only for women and a bigger room where all can exercise in a shared space.

- Bowling: [Bowling hall Keilakukko](#)
- Swimming: [Naisvuori swimming hall](#) and [Rantakeidas](#). Public swimming beaches and ice swimming sites: [Uimarannat ja avantuintipaikat – Mikkeli](#)
- Outdoor ice skating rinks, skiing trails, outdoor gyms, lean-tos, and more: [Fluent Outdoors - Mikkeli \(fluentprogress.fi\)](#)
- Snowboarding, skiing: [Tornimäki \(tornimaki.fi\)](#)
- Public playgrounds for children: [Playgrounds by neighborhood](#)

There are many opportunities to do sports in the Kalevankangas neighborhood in Mikkeli, which is located approximately 2 km from the city centre. Bus line **7** operates between the city centre and the Kalevankangas area. From Kalevankangas you can find e.g., the following places:

- multiple outdoor trails where you can jog in the summer and ski in the wintertime
- outdoor gym
- [Saimaa Stadiumi centre](#): climbing, gym, running track, volleyball, SuperCorner activity park, and more
- [Sport Forum](#): gym, tennis, squash, group exercise classes, and more
- Local ice hockey team Jukurit plays at **Let's Go Arena** (Raviradantie 24 A). Also concerts and other events are organised at the venue.

Culture

- Movie theaters: [Kinolinna and Ritz](#)
- [Museums](#), such as Mikkeli Art Museum
- [Libraries](#): Main library is located in the city centre, Raatihuoneenkatu 6
- Restaurants, bars, cafeterias: many of them in the city centre
- Theatre: [Mikkelin teatteri](#), Savilahdenkatu 11

Places to visit

- **Naisvuori observation tower and a small park**

On the Naisvuori hill in the city centre, there is an observation tower and a small park. From inside the tower, you can see Mikkeli from above. The view is nice also from the park. During summer months, there is also a café which happens to be one of the best places for waffles in Mikkeli. More information on [City of Mikkeli's website](#).

- **Mikkelipuisto park, Pursialankatu 5**

Approximately 1,5 km from the city centre there is Mikkelipuisto park that is close to nature and a nice place to visit especially during summertime. In Mikkelipuisto, there is a campfire place, restaurant Greeneri, and two playgrounds for children. In summer, there are small gardens in Mikkelipuisto, and events and activities are also held there. Also, Kaihu nature path and swimming beach is located close to Mikkelipuisto. More information on [Mikkelipuisto's website](#).

- **Kenkävero vicarage, Pursialankatu 6**

Kenkävero is one of the best-known attractions in Mikkeli. It is located approximately 1,5 km from the city centre. In the old, picturesque vicarage milieu they sell handicrafts, organise events, and serve delicacies for smaller and bigger appetite. In the summertime visitors can also enjoy Kenkävero's lovely garden and atmosphere. More information on [Kenkävero's website](#).



Kenkävero vicarage in summer

More tips on the websites: [City of Mikkeli](#), [Visit Mikkeli](#)

Xamk offers students things to do on their free time. On Mikkeli campus, there is a gym, a campus sports hall, as well as a band room for making music. Different activities and events are organised on and outside of campus, e.g., by Student Union Kaakko, student wellbeing services, and internationalisation services.

Services for immigrants in Mikkeli

Multicultural Centre Mimosa

[Multicultural Centre Mimosa](#) is located less than 2 km away from the city centre (Raviradantie 8-10). During its opening hours, Mimosa offers walk-in guidance and counseling related to, e.g., everyday life, permits, citizenship, and Finnish culture. Mimosa organises group activities, such as groups to practice Finnish or other language skills. Mimosa's events, small trips, and visits to different places in Mikkeli are open for everyone to join.

Important addresses in Mikkeli

Emergency number in Finland: 112

- **Mikkeli central hospital:** Porrassalmenkatu 35—37 (emergency duty service number: 116117 → *only for urgent emergencies!*)
- **Private health centers:**
 - Ikioma* – Porrassalmenkatu 21
 - Mehiläinen* – Porrassalmenkatu 16
 - Pihlajalinna* – Maaherrankatu 13
 - Terveystalo* – Vilhonkatu 14
- **Police station:** Hallituskatu 4
- **Mikalo office (student housing, rental apartments):** Maaherrankatu 44

Health care services in Mikkeli

Municipal health services – Eloisa

Provider: South Savo Wellbeing Services County (Eloisa)

Location: Porrassalmenkatu 35–37, Mikkeli

Services: Doctor and nurse appointments, vaccinations, mental health, nutrition, physiotherapy,

podiatry, primary health care ward and hospice care

Contact: +358 15 211 411 (Mon–Fri 8–15)

[More information](#)

Private health care providers

Mehiläinen – Porrassalmenkatu 16

Offers general and specialist medical services, including dermatology, orthopedics, gynecology, and more. Also provides 24/7 digital clinic access. (<https://mehilainen.fi>)

Pihlajalinna – Maaherrankatu 13 (<https://www.pihlajalinna.fi/en/>)

Terveystalo – Vilhonkatu 14 (<https://www.terveystalo.com/>)

These centers offer a range of private health services including general practice, occupational healthcare, and dental care.

Coming to Mikkeli with your children

Child health center (neuvola in Finnish)

If you move to Finland with your children, it is strongly recommended to be in contact with the local child health center (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 children's healthcare in Finland. Neuvola workers monitor and promote the physical, mental, and social condition of children under school age, give vaccinations, and support 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 \(stm.fi\)](#).

To find your local neuvola in the Mikkeli area, call the general phone number +358 15 744 7744 (South Savo Wellbeing Services County Eloisa) during Monday—Friday, 8 am—3 pm. At first 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, ask to indicate the address of the neuvola you are supposed to visit, based on your home address.

Schools in Mikkeli

In Finland, compulsory education is between ages 6—18 years old, meaning that all kids of that age range living in Finland must go to school. You need to fill in an application for all type of schools and daycare to receive a study place for your child. Usually, you will be allocated to the school closest to your home address, if possible. The handling of the application might take up to four months, so it is important to start the paperwork well in advance. Please notify the daycare center or school if you move out from Mikkeli.

Early childhood education and preschool

A child has the right to *early childhood education from the age of nine months until the start of school*. You can apply for an early childhood education place year-round, but the application must be left at least four months before the desired start of the service. Early childhood education is organised in Mikkeli in the city's kindergartens and family daycare, as well as in private kindergartens.

More information about applying for early childhood education services can be found from the City of Mikkeli's website: [Mikkeli - Oppiminen](#). Also, the City of Mikkeli's service coordinator gives guidance relating to early childhood education services and places: email varhaiskasvatuksenpalveluohjaus@sivistys.mikkeli.fi / tel. +358 44 794 5796.

Every child must participate in *preschool* one year before starting school, usually at the age of six years. Preschool education is organised usually in kindergartens. Preschool education by the City of Mikkeli is free of cost, but you must apply for a preschool education place. For the online application form, you need Finnish banking credentials. In case you do not have those yet, please contact the early childhood education services: email daisy@sivistys.mikkeli.fi / tel. +358 40 755 4710 to progress with the application.

Link to the application form: [eDaisy \(daisynet.fi\)](#)

Basic compulsory education

Basic compulsory education

Compulsory education in Finland is free of charge. When your child will start school, you might be required to show a proof of vaccinations, so bring all the necessary documents with you when moving to Finland.

Non-Finnish speaking children are 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 to which the student will be transferred to, to continue the studies.

Children of primary school age 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, considering the child's best interests.

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

[Link to the application form for preparatory education for basic education](#)

Contact information: Immigrant Education Coordinator Riikka Turunen, tel. +358 50 311 7013.

STARTING THE STUDIES

Check the beginning date of your studies on [Xamk's website](#). Arrive before your studies start, to be able to move in your new accommodation smoothly and have a bit of time to get familiar with the new city.

The time between arriving in Finland and starting your studies is good for...

- ✓ visiting the city
- ✓ getting familiar with public transportation and/or buy a bike if you wish to have one
- ✓ practicing how to find the bus schedules
- ✓ getting a bus card if you wish to have one
- ✓ getting a Finnish SIM card for your phone if necessary
- ✓ learning how to arrive in Xamk Mikkeli campus.

Getting a Finnish SIM card for your phone

You will be staying in Finland for a long period of time, which is why it might be a good idea to get a Finnish phone number to be able to use the internet and make calls in the country.

You can buy a **prepaid SIM card** from **R-kioski**. Depending on the type of offer, the average price for a prepaid can be 5—35 €. With a prepaid subscription, you can charge the SIM card with an amount of money and use it according to the chosen offer, until the credit runs out and it is time to recharge the card. More information: [Prepaid-liittymät / R-kioski](#).

For Xamk's 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).

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

DNA: [dna.fi](#)

Elisa: [elisa.fi/asiakaspalvelu/en](#)

Telia: [telia.fi/english](#)

Opening a bank account

There are certain requirements such as proving your identity with official identity documents when opening a bank account in Finland. The requirements may vary slightly depending on the bank. Therefore, familiarise yourself carefully with what is needed. General guidelines of some of the most common banks in Finland:

S-Bank: [Welcome to S-Bank](#)

Danske Bank: [Accounts - Danske Bank](#)

Nordea: [How to open banking services when you are new to Finland](#)

Osuuspankki: [Have you moved to Finland? Would you like to become a customer of OP?](#)

Coming to Xamk Mikkeli campus

Xamk Mikkeli campus is located only 1,5 km away from the city centre (approximately 20 min walk). There is also a bus connection (bus **2X**) between the centre and the campus.

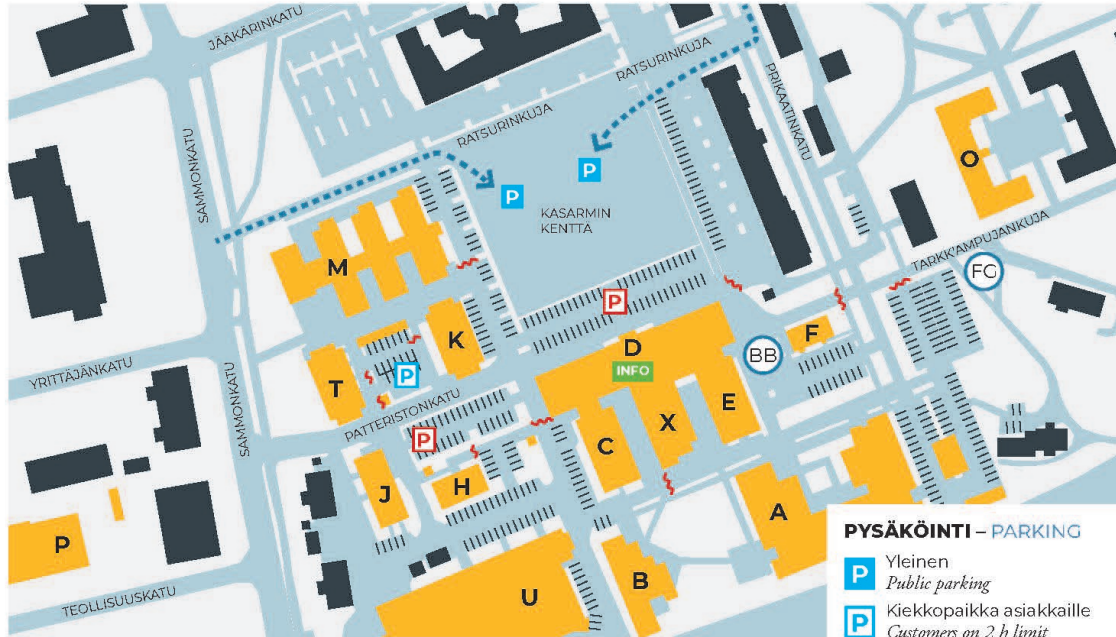


Xamk Mikkeli campus, main building (D) entrance

Mikkeli campus address is Patteristonkatu 3, 50100 Mikkeli. This Google Maps link shows you the way to campus from Mikkeli railway station: [Xamk, Mikkeli campus – Google Maps](#).

Mikkelin kampus – Mikkelä Campus

PATTERISTONKATU 3, 50100 MIKKELI



Kampuksen info palvelee pääsisäänkäynnin luona D-rakennuksessa.
The Campus information desk is next to the main entrance of building D.

PYSÄKÖINTI – PARKING

- P** Yleinen
Public parking
- P** Kiekkopaikka asiakkaille
Customers on 2 h limit
- P** Vieraspaidat (lupalappu infosta).
Parking only with visitor permit (from info).

AUDITORIOT JA KOKOUSTILAT CONFERENCE FACILITIES

- A** Kampussali A
Auditorium A
- D** Kampussali D
Auditorium D
- M** Mikpoli-sali
Mikpoli Auditorium
- M** Kuitula
Conference Room Kuitula
- T** Ravintola Tallin kokoustilat
Conference Facilities of Talli
- D** Luokat D127 ja D128
Classrooms D127 and D128

HALLINTO, T&K, MUUT ADMINISTRATION, R&D

- M** Darcmedia
- M** Disec Oy
- H** Hallintopalvelut
Administration Services
- M** Mikpoli
- P** Puupoli
- E** Viestintä- ja markkinointipalvelut
Communication & Marketing Services
- X** Avoin AMK, täydennyskoulutus
Open University of Applied Sciences

OPISKELIJAN PALVELUT STUDENT SERVICES

- X** Hakutoimisto
Admissions Office
- K** Kampuskirjasto
Campus Library
- X** Lehtilukusali
Reading Room
- X** Kansainvälistymispalvelut
International Services
- X** Opintotoimisto
Student Affairs Office
- X** Opiskelijakuraattori
Caretaker
- F** Opiskeluterveydenhuolto
Student Health Care
- F** Opintopsykologi
Counselling Psychologist
- X** Oppilaitospastori
University Chaplain
- X** Opiskelijakunta Kaakko
Student Union Kaakko
- D** Itseopiskelutila
Self-Study Facilities
- D** Vahvistamarit
Caretakers

RAVINTOLAT JA KAHVILAT RESTAURANTS & CAFES

- A** Kahvila Alfa
Cafe Alfa
- D** Ravintola DeXi
Restaurant DeXi
- B** Ravintola Kasarmina
Restaurant Kasarmina
- T** Ravintola Talli
Restaurant Talli
- U** Keilahallin kahvila
Bowling Cafe

HARRASTUSTILAT FREE TIME FACILITIES

- U** Keilahalli
Bowling Alley
- U** Kuntosali
Gym
- E** Bänditila
Band Room
- D** Liikuntasali
Fitness Gym
- O** Opiskelijoiden vapaa-ajan tila
Student's Recreational House
- U** Pienryhmättila
Small Group Facility
- FG** Frisbeegolf
Frisbee Golf
- BB** Katukoriscenttä ja pingispöytä
Outdoor Basketball & Table Tennis

LABORATORIOT/ OPPIYMPÄRISTÖT LABORATORIES LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

- M** IMT-studiot
IMT Studios
- A** LVI- ja materiaalitieteen laboratorio
Building Services and Laboratories
- T** Opetuskeittiö
Teaching Kitchen
- P** Puulaboratorio
Wood Laboratory
- E** Sähkötekniikan laboratorio
Electrical Engineering Laboratory
- J** Ympäristötekniikan laboratorio
Environmental Engineering Laboratory

The beginning of the studies

Along with the first lectures, there will be orientation programme to familiarise you with practicalities such as the campus services, studying environments, and getting acquainted with living in Mikkeli. The exact timetable of the onsite orientation will be announced by email later.

After the first days, you should:

- ✓ know how to move around Xamk Mikkeli campus and find different classrooms and offices
- ✓ be familiar with the services available for students at campus
- ✓ know how to activate your Xamk account: after activating your Xamk account, all communication by email must be conducted with your Xamk email account
- ✓ know how to login to Xamk digital platforms (Lux, Peppi, Learn)
- ✓ know how to download, activate, and use the Tuudo app on your phone
- ✓ know how to read the classes timetables and grades
- ✓ be familiar with the structure of your studies (e.g., holidays, breaks)
- ✓ know Xamk rules and regulations
- ✓ know how to download your study certificate from the Peppi system
- ✓ know how to get a student card from the student union Kaakko (optional).

By participating in the beginning of the studies and the orientation programme, you should know everything you need for a comfortable beginning of your studies in Mikkeli. However, if you still have doubts, please do not hesitate to visit the International Services office on campus.

Punctuality is always expected in Finland. If you are requested to be in a place at an exact time, you must be punctual. Otherwise, you might miss your appointment. This applies also to lectures and in-office appointments. If you are late, you will miss the information in the beginning of the session, and it will not be repeated.

During the first months of the studies, a document check is organised on campus to check the originals of the documents you used when applied for the studies at Xamk. You will be contacted by email about the date, time, and place of the document check. It is not necessary to bring all the documents to campus before the requested day.

Registration at the DVV office

After moving to Finland, it is necessary to register at the DVV office. First, check if there will be a DVV pop up registration day on campus. If not, follow these following steps:

Step 1: Fill the online form available on DVV website: [Registration of a foreign student | Digital and](#)

[population data services agency \(dvv.fi\)](https://dvv.fi).

Step 2: Book an appointment from the DVV office: dvv.fi/reservation.

Step 3: Visit the DVV office on the time of your appointment.

When visiting the office, remember to have with you a valid ID or passport, residence permit and study certificate (previously downloaded from Peppi system). Read more from [DVV's website](#).

Important! The DVV office in Mikkeli is closed permanently from 1 December 2025 onwards. Therefore, if possible, book an appointment at the DVV office in Helsinki to take place the same time when you arrive in Finland. Alternatively, the most convenient option from Mikkeli is the DVV office in Lahti.

Good to know regarding the studies

Schedule for the academic year 2026–2027

Autumn semester: August 1, 2026 – December 31, 2027

Spring semester: January 1, 2027 – July 31, 2027

Summer studies: May 2, 2027 – August 31, 2027

No teaching will be held on the following dates:

October 19–25, 2026 (week 43)

December 21, 2026 – January 10, 2027 (weeks 52, 53, and 1)

March 1–7, 2027 (week 9)

Usually, lectures take place during weekdays (Monday—Friday).

Regarding **attendance**, each teacher decides which modality to use to deliver their classes and whether attendance is compulsory. If attendance at classes is compulsory, your participation in-person does influence your final grades.

Do not come to campus when feeling ill. If you have a class or an office appointment in person, please contact the teacher or staff member in advance to inform them about the situation and your unavailability to join in person.

Bring your own computer and smartphone with you. Xamk has a BYOD (bring your own device) policy: you need to have a computer to follow the studies at Xamk. Read more about the requirements from Xamk's website: [BYOD - Bring Your Own Device - Xamk](#). Note also, that Xamk uses multi-factor authentication: remember to make sure your smartphone supports Microsoft Authenticator or Google Authenticator.

In case you have any doubts regarding the studies (classes, participation to classes, exams, grades, and so on) please be in touch directly with the teacher or your designated contact person about the studies.

LIVING IN FINLAND

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

Finns, Finnish culture, and values

Finns may seem quiet and introverted, but once you manage to break the ice with them, they are usually very relaxed, honest, direct, and polite people. 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 three million saunas in the country – more than cars! Learn more: [Quick guide to Finnish sauna etiquette | My Helsinki](#). Most people in Finland understand and speak English, even if they may be shy to use the language. However, learning Finnish language is essential if you wish to live in the country for a long time.

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. Punctuality is also expected. For several years in a row, Finland has been ranking as the happiest country in the world thanks to its values such as safety, equality, social supports, and low corruption.

Nature and the seasons in Finland – and how to dress according to the weather

Finland is called the “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 clean and drinkable.

Around 75 % of the Finnish territory is covered with forests. In Finland, people have a deep connection with nature. Nature is always around the corner, even in the bigger cities, and it is everyone's right to have access to it. Be considerate when spending time in the nature and leave the place how you found it: bring your trash back home or to the nearest trash bin. Familiarise yourself with the outdoor etiquette on the [website of Metsähallitus](#).

Autumn - Syksy (September to November)

In autumn it gets a bit darker day by day, and the weather is often windy and rainy. However, sunny

autumn days are typically great for enjoying the outdoors and the colourful leaves on the trees that create the beautiful landscapes of ruska. Please note that autumn in Finland can be very cold already. Already the end of October–November might require you to use your winter jacket. Watch out for the first ice of the season (roads can be slippery).

*Always wear reflectors in the dark: they help you to be more visible in the traffic.
As we say in Finland: “A reflector is a cheap life insurance.”*

Autumntime celebrations in Finland: All Saints' Day – Pyhäinpäivä



How to dress according to the weather in autumn?

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

In Finland, the weather can change very quickly, and during some days you will be able to “experience all four seasons on the same day”! It is important for you and your family members (including the little ones!) to always be prepared for the change of weather when spending time outdoors. When kids are in school in Finland, they spend a lot of time outdoors during throughout the year. From Yle’s article you can find some tips for how to dress children in Finland here: [How do you weatherproof children in Finland? | Yle.](#)

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

Winter - Talvi (December to February)

Winters in Finland are cold and dark: temperatures are often below 0°C and can drop as low as -30°C. The sun rises late in the mornings and sets very early. The likelihood of seeing the northern lights in Lapland (northern part of Finland) is the highest during the winter months. If you are lucky enough, you may also get to see them in the south, although it is not very common.

During the wintertime the roads are often icy, so it is a good idea to wear anti-slip accessories. In the dark, it is essential to make yourself visible by wearing reflectors. Also, because of the lack of light during wintertime, our bodies cannot get enough vitamin D from the sun. Vitamin D deficiency can cause osteoporosis, immunodeficiency, and elevated risk for autoimmune diseases, and therefore it is necessary to take vitamin D supplements during the winter. Darkness can also affect mental health for some people. It is a good idea to use small, cosy indoor light sources, such as string lights, in the house. Do things that keep you occupied: start new hobbies, spend time with friends, participate in events organised in the city, explore new places, or try out winter sports. Winter in Finland can be harsh, but it is 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 welcome to visit the International Office on the campus.



Wintertime celebrations in Finland: Independence Day – Itsenäisyyspäivä (6 December), Christmas - Joulukuu, New Year – Uusivuosi, Epiphany – Loppiainen.

How to dress according to the weather in winter?

When coming to Finland for the first time, 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 are two main rules: wear warm clothes and dress in layers to protect yourself from the cold. In the coldest days it is 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 waterproof shoes and reflector.

Watch this video to learn more: [How to dress for winter - YouTube](#).

The amount of clothes also depends on how long you will need to be outdoors and how active you will be. When temperatures are close to 0°C, it is usually ok to skip “Layer 1” (see above) if your body feels comfortable.

Walking on fresh snow is 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 for these days. Always remember to remove the ice grippers when entering indoors! As they are designed for outdoor use, they ruin indoor floors.

Spring - Kevät (March to May)

The weather is fresh, and days are getting every day brighter and warmer. 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 can fall in the ice-cold water. Around April, the snow starts melting, nature starts becoming greener and flowers start blossoming.

Springtime celebrations: Easter - Pääsiäinen, May Day – Vappu.



How to dress according to the weather in spring?

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

Temperatures in the nighttime can still go below zero and will freeze the snow that melted during the day. This becomes very slippery to walk on, be careful!

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 is light during most of the nighttime. People in Finland 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 until end of July. Students have quite a long summer break from school too!

Summertime celebrations: Midsummer - *Juhannus*.



How to dress according to the weather in summer?

In the summer, temperatures stay around 15—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 often it is a good idea also to have a light sweater or light jacket for the evenings or rainy days.

Basic Finnish phrases

| English | Finnish |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Hello! | Moi! |
| Goodbye/See you! | Nähdään! |
| Bye! | Moikka! |
| Sorry/Excuse me | Anteeksi |
| Yes | Kyllä |
| No | Ei |
| Thank you! | Kiitos! |
| You are welcome | Ole hyvä |
| How are you? | Mitä kuuluu? |
| I'm fine, thank you | Hyvää, kiitos |
| 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 Mikkeli | Menen Mikkeliin |
| Where is the train station? | Missä juna-asema on? |
| Train | Juna |
| Bus | Bussi |
| Ticket | Lippu |
| I am a student | Minä olen opiskelija |

Learning Finnish (language and culture)

Already prior your arrival to Mikkeli you can use, for example, different language-learning apps and online materials to learn Finnish. Below you can find some examples.

Apps

[Duolingo](#)

Websites

[Yle Oppiminen](#) (lots of materials for learning Finnish)

[Yle Kielikoulu](#) (learn Finnish by watching Yle's programmes)

[Suomi Taskussa](#) (videos for Finnish learning)

[Learn Finnish | Kielibuusti](#) (lots of information, tips, and materials about possibilities to learn Finnish online)

Online courses

[Suomee! | Extreme Finnish](#) (free of charge online course focusing on spoken Finnish)

When in Mikkeli, you can study Finnish at Xamk. If you are interested in additional Finnish courses or language café activities, you can check the calendar of, for example, the [Mikkeli Community College](#) to see what they currently offer. [Mikkeli International Community](#) also organises informal gatherings for Finnish learning.

Participation to the lectures at Xamk should be your priority. Please check this carefully when choosing an additional language course. However, if you have moved in Finland with your spouse, these courses are a great chance for them to learn the Finnish language.

In addition to language learning, it is worthwhile to familiarise yourself a bit with the Finnish culture already before you arrive. Having some basic knowledge about the culture in advance may help you to smoother adapt to the new environment, and reduce potential culture shock in the beginning of your life in Finland. Below you can find some information sources about the Finnish culture and living in Finland.

[Finnish Customs \(infoFinland.fi\)](#) (lots of information about the culture and living in Finland)

[A guide to Finnish customs and manners - thisisFINLAND](#)

You can also contact your Integration Coordinator at the Internationalisation Services with any questions related to the Finnish culture and living in Finland, already before your arrival.

Looking for a job in Finland

Looking for a job in Finland can be a lengthy process, not only for foreigners but for Finnish people

as well. It is important to keep in mind that finding a job can take time – please do not expect to find a job right after your arrival to the country. However, there are things you can do even before arriving in Finland to increase your chances on finding employment.

As a student your studies should always be the main priority. 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).

How to boost your employability before arriving in Finland?

1. Make your CV (resume) and LinkedIn profile ready.

Your CV or resume should include your name and contact information, work experience (relevant for the field or job), educational background, as well as language and IT skills. If you wish, you can also add a picture of you, a short profile text, and references.

A good CV is employer-friendly: informative, clear and concise as well as visually pleasing. It is important to keep in mind that a CV should be one page long only, or maximum two pages in case you have a lot of relevant experience considering the position you are applying for.

When applying for jobs, it is a good idea to slightly modify your CV for each position, so that it first and foremost presents your experience and skills that match with the job advertisement.

[Résumé or CV | Eilakaisla](#) provides tips for making a good CV.

[Canva](#) has a broad selection of CV templates, also in the free-of-cost version.

In addition to CV, having an up-to-date [LinkedIn profile](#) may help you to notice job openings as well as for you to get noticed by employers, and grow your professional network.

2. Familiarise yourself with the working life and job market in Finland.

In case you are thinking of getting a part-time job or working in Finland, it is useful to have knowledge of the Finnish working life and job market. Good places to start are the websites mentioned below:

- [infoFinland](#) 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.

3. It is never too early to start studying Finnish!

Speaking and understanding Finnish is a huge advantage when looking for a job in Finland.

Therefore, learning and practicing the Finnish language in your free time is highly recommended. See tips for pre-arrival and additional Finnish study opportunities on this information package's section 'Learning Finnish (language and culture)'.

How to boost your employability once you are in Finland?

1. *Some additional certificates and experience that can advance your employability*

- If you want to do certain jobs that require food handling and work on food premises (such as waiter/waitress, kitchen worker, 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 €. More information on Finnish Food Authority's website: [Hygiene Passport - Finnish Food Authority \(ruokavirasto.fi\)](https://ruokavirasto.fi/en/hygiene-passport).
- If serving alcohol is included in your job, an **Alcohol passport** is also required. More information on Valvira's website: [Alcohol passport | Valvira](https://valvira.fi/en/food-and-drink/food-and-drink-licences/food-and-drink-licences-for-employees).
- **Occupational safety card** training provides basic information about the dangers of the work environment and occupational safety in a shared workplace. Read more about the Occupational safety card and how to obtain it from The Centre of Occupational Safety website: [Occupational Safety Card \(tyoturvallisuus.fi\)](https://tyoturvallisuus.fi/en/occupational-safety-card).
- **Volunteering** often is a good addition to a CV, especially if you have developed your career- or industry-related skills while volunteering. In addition, in case you have not yet worked in Finland, voluntary work is a good way to demonstrate that you have experience in operating in a work-like environment in Finland already.

2. *Networking*

Having a professional network in Finland (and beyond) may increase your chances to find job opportunities. There are different ways of networking: you can, for example, participate in events such as Worklife Boom organised by Xamk, seminars, and activities related to job search. You can also be part of different locally operating organizations, such as student entrepreneurship society [Patteri](#) or [JCI Mikkeli](#) (latter for people aged between 18—40 years). Remember also online networking platforms such as LinkedIn and different online events!