

## ***Keeping in touch with home***

Keeping in touch with the people back home is an essential part of your foreign experience. This section provides information on how your friends and relatives may contact you while in Italy.

- **Phone**

Before you leave, it is a good idea to give your family SAIS Europe's phone number: +39 051 29 17 811

- **E-mail**

Students will be given a SAIS e-mail account during the summer. The account is the preferred channel of communication among faculty, staff and students. Orientation information for SAIS Europe ICT facilities will be provided upon arrival.

- **Fax**

Personal fax messages may be sent to the fax number: +39 051 22 85 05. Remind senders to put your name at the top of the fax or on a cover sheet. A staff member will forward the fax via email to you.

- **Mail**

We recommend that you use SAIS Europe's address to receive mail (rather than your apartment address). Please remind senders to put your name in the first line of the address. SAIS Europe's address is:

Johns Hopkins University, SAIS Europe  
Via Belmeloro 11, 40126 Bologna, Italy

- **Freight**

Packages sent within the EU are not subject to customs charges. Packages sent from OUTSIDE the EU are ALWAYS subject to CUSTOMS charges and VAT. Charges can vary from 20-25% of the declared value and are also assessed on the postage costs!

Clothing or other personal belongings should be indicated as *effetti personali usati* (used personal belongings) and you should enter "N.V.C."

(*nessun valore commerciale*, or no commercial value) in the section of the customs slip reserved for the value of the goods. The higher the value you indicate for the item, the higher the fee you will be required to pay. See also the next section on “Insurance of Goods Shipped or Mailed” for additional details.

Medicine; contact lenses, and solutions, vitamins and other pharmaceutical or cosmetic items should not be mailed. The customs clearing process is time-consuming so it is better to bring sufficient supplies of essential items with you. To have such items cleared by customs, it is necessary to present a statement from an Italian physician declaring that an equivalent medicine is not available in Italy. Most doctors are unwilling to write such a statement and even if you are able to find a doctor willing to provide you with one, they will charge you a fee. You would then have to send it to the Medical Office at the relevant airport.

- **Insurance of Goods you Ship or Mail**  
**Experience has shown that packages that are not insured clear customs more quickly and easily than those that are insured, so you should consider sending packages uninsured. Furthermore, customs charges are payable on the value you declare for insurance purposes. Keep this in mind before insuring a package!**

We recommend that you use regular **AIR MAIL service**. Use SAIS Europe’s mailing address. Surface mail can take up to six months to arrive! If you must use a courier service, contact the courier company for details, restrictions and customs information.

**If you wish to send your belongings to SAIS Europe with a moving company, try to arrange for them to arrive after you!** The school cannot pay customs charges in advance for you, and you will also incur storage charges. Furthermore, if packages arrive before you, they will be kept at the school in an unattended space. **The School cannot assume any responsibility for such items.** You should also inform SAIS Europe’s receptionist of the arrival of such a delivery so that she will accept the goods. Keep in mind also that the school is closed on Friday, Saturday and Sundays during the summer.

## ***What to pack***

Be sure to have the following items with you for your trip to Bologna:

- **Passport** (or ID card for EU citizens) **valid for the entire year**
- **Visa (required for all non-EU citizens)**
- **This manual – the directions will come in handy**
- **As much of your clothing and personal effects as possible.**

To save on shipping costs and customs duties, you are advised to carry as much as possible in your luggage. The convenience of having your belongings with you upon arrival will likely outweigh the cost of “heavy luggage”. Be certain to call your airline to determine what their excess weight charges are so that you may make an informed choice. If you wish to send packages by courier, try to make sure they arrive after you (see also “Freight” in the “Keeping in touch with home” section).

## ***Clothing***

The weather in Bologna varies substantially from season to season, with warm autumn and spring months and a cold winter. Your wardrobe should run the gamut from shorts and skirts to sweaters and a heavy coat.

For September and October, shorts and T-shirts are the norm and you'll probably find yourself playing football or throwing a Frisbee in one of Bologna's parks. The same is true for April and May. A light jacket will come in handy at night and you will need an umbrella for the occasional rain shower.

By mid-November, a warm winter coat is an absolute necessity and you should bring gloves and a scarf as well. Throughout the winter, which normally lasts until mid-March, you should be prepared for rain and the occasional snow flurry. Boots and wool socks will keep you warm when walking home at night.

Most students at SAIS Europe dress casually. However, you may want to bring some dressier clothes for special events such as visits by the a government

official, ambassadors and dignitaries. Try to bring at least one suit for more formal events, which could also include an internship or job interview. The Austrian group of students usually organizes a typical ball in the spring, so if you have an elegant evening dress or suit you may want to bring it with you as well.

Many people join gyms in Bologna, so workout clothes will come in handy. Information on gyms and sports facilities will be provided when you arrive.

### ***Toiletries***

Bologna is a cosmopolitan city that has many pharmacies and drugstores. You can buy nearly anything here that you would be able to find in your home country. Medicines and toiletries, however, may be somewhat expensive in Italy, and saline solution, aspirin and other over-the-counter drugs are cheaper in countries such as the U.S. Thus, although you do not need to bring a year's supply of shaving cream and toothpaste with you, it may be more economical to bring some supplies. For example, dental floss is much more expensive in Italy than in the USA! As any SAIS graduate can tell you, it's a matter of opportunity cost – is the extra weight worth the extra money? It's up to you, but rest assured that you will be able to buy what you don't bring.

### ***Medicines***

Remember that the customs clearance procedure for medicines which are shipped or mailed is very time consuming and almost impractical. Therefore, if you need to take medicine on a regular basis it might be wise to bring a sufficient supply with you.

Previous students have suggested that those coming from the USA may wish to bring a supply of cold and flu medicine also, as such items are rather expensive in Italy. (See also “Freight” in the “Keeping in touch with home” section).

## ***Computer***

It is strongly recommended that you bring a portable computer (Windows or Mac) or tablet. Most are manufactured with a transformer capable of running in Italy.

- **Student Lounge**

SAIS Europe has Windows-based computers in the Student Lounge for your use. MS Office, Windows Media and Real Audio players, Internet browsers and other applications are installed on the computers. A high volume printer is also available for student use. Each student is given 1 euro free of charge. Additional pages can be purchased from a vending machine in the library or through PayPal.

- **Internet and Telephone / LAN Access**

The computers in the Student Lounge are attached to SAIS Europe's LAN which has access to the Internet. Wireless access is available throughout the building for students with portable computers, tablets or smartphones. Italian telephone companies offer many Internet access options. The flat rate per month is usually best if you use the service at home. You will need to check relevant costs to find the best option. Keep in mind that the Internet service at the school is covered by your tuition!

## ***Other Electronics***

Apartments in Italy operate on a 50 Hz, 220-240 volt current, whereas most American homes operate on a 115-130 voltage at 60 Hz. American equipment designed for usage with the lower voltage will be destroyed if plugged into the higher voltage system. Replacing the internal transformer can be very expensive. An external transformer is needed in order to use American electronic equipment in Italy. **To avoid costly mistakes, be sure to check whether the appliance can handle the current BEFORE you plug it into the socket.** Electric clocks designed for a 110-volt circuit will not keep time correctly on a 220-volt circuit even with a transformer.

- **Mobile phones**

For information check [www.vodafone.it](http://www.vodafone.it) - [www.tim.it](http://www.tim.it) (telecom) - [www.wind.it](http://www.wind.it) or [www.tre.it](http://www.tre.it).

## ***Textbooks***

To give you the opportunity to buy textbooks before coming to Italy, we ask professors to provide a list of recommended textbooks for preterm and first semester courses. This information will be available on a password-protected webpage, and during the summer you will receive an email from the Head Librarian, telling you how to access "Textbooks for Incoming Students". Once in Italy, students use Amazon Italia and other online sellers to purchase books.

In some cases professors will also provide a full syllabus for the course. However, as professors may make minor changes to their syllabi -- sometimes until shortly before the semester begins -- please consider them drafts. Please remember that your advising session at the beginning of the academic year may cause you to reassess and change your course selection. Note also that the library keeps all required readings for courses on 4-hour reserve loan, in multiple copies as necessary.

You may wish to bring old study notes if you think they will help you study for classes and core exams.

## ***Notebooks***

Students from last year, particularly those coming from the U.S., have suggested that you bring a supply of notebooks and index cards because these items are much more expensive in Italy!

## ***Photographs***

Non-EU students will need four identical passport-size photographs for the *permesso di soggiorno*. Both black-and-white and color are acceptable, but they must be **on a white background**.

## ***Transportation***

Bologna is centrally located in the Po Valley and is served by the G. Marconi International Airport (BLQ), about half an hour by taxi from the school. Other airports within a few hours of Bologna are: *Milano Linate*, *Milano Malpensa*, *Roma Fiumicino* and *Venezia Marco Polo*. Other smaller airports in the area are in Bergamo, Verona and Forlì, served mainly by low-cost airline companies, which generally provide a bus shuttle service to nearby cities. Bologna is also a hub for rail lines all over Italy as well and is linked to three main highways, or *autostrade*, in Northern Italy (A1, A13, A14).

Please note that all prices on the following pages are current as of March 2015. Some increases may occur before your arrival! Other useful links are also available on SAIS Europe's website.

## ***Trains in Italy***

Trains are widely used in Italy. The train timetables and information on fares are available on the web at: <http://www.trenitalia.it/> and <http://www.italotreno.it/> Information is available in English. Tickets can be purchased online or at a train station. Make sure to check the station your train is leaving from (which is not always the central station).

## ***If you fly into MILAN***

You may take either a bus or a taxi to get to the train station (Milano Centrale) from the *Linate* or *Malpensa* airports. Taking a taxi will clearly be more convenient, but a bus will be substantially cheaper. Special buses can be found

outside the airports and tickets can generally be purchased inside the terminal or on the bus. The [Malpensa Shuttle](#) costs €10 and leaves every 20 minutes for the Milan central train station. The trip takes about an hour. The [Linate Shuttle](#) to the central train station costs €5, leaves every 30 minutes, and is about a 20 minute ride. A taxi from *Malpensa* to the train station will cost at least €80, while a taxi from *Linate* costs at least €35.

Fast trains between Milan and Bologna take approximately one hour and cost €42 in second class. Cheaper tickets may be available on slower trains which take approximately two hours.

### ***If you fly into ROME***

There is a special train called the “Leonardo Express” which runs every day from *Fiumicino* to Rome’s central train station (*Roma Termini*) every 30 minutes from 5:57 am to 11:27 pm. This is a non-stop train that costs around €15.

Alternatively, a taxi from *Fumicino* to *Roma Termini* costs about €60. The train ride from Rome to Bologna takes about two to four hours, depending on the type of train you take ([Trenitalia](#) or [Italo](#)). Second class seats on IC trains cost between €30 and €70.

### ***If you fly into BOLOGNA***

There are a number of ways to get from the Bologna Airport to the school or to your hotel. The most convenient but obviously more expensive way is by taxi, which will cost you about €20/30. Don't be surprised when you are asked to pay more than the amount indicated on the meter in the taxi. This is always the case, as taxes and additional charges for luggage, night time, Sundays and holidays are not indicated on the meter. Alternatively, you can catch the BLQ *Aerobus*, which can also take you to the city center. Follow the instructions in the following section for indications about how to arrive at SAIS Europe from the central train station.

One-way ticket from/to the Airport € 6.00. Tickets can be purchased directly on this [website](#), from the automatic vending machines located in the airport, and in



Bologna at the Central Railway Station (at the Aerobus departure point) or at the TPER ticket offices. The BLQ leaves every 15 minutes and stops only at the main hospital (*Ospedale Maggiore*), on *Via Ugo Bassi/Via Indipendenza* in the city center, the train station and the trade fair. The most convenient stop for you is the train station (see directions from the train station on the next page).

### ***From Bologna Central Train Station***

When you arrive at the railway station in Bologna you are approximately 10 minutes from your final destination! You may either take a taxi from the station to SAIS Europe or hop on a bus. If you arrive before 7pm to SAIS Europe, you can go directly to the school. If you arrive later in the evening or on the weekend, you should find a hotel immediately and go to the Center the next day. There is a list of hotels in the appendix of this manual. Alternatively, you can look for hotels on [www.booking.com](http://www.booking.com)

- **By Taxi**

There is a taxi stand to the right of the main exit of the station. Ask the driver to take you to *Via Belmeloro, 11*. Some taxi drivers will also know about the *Università Americana* (or *la Hopkins*). The ride takes about 10 minutes, depending on traffic, and costs about €8/10. Remember that there is an additional charge for luggage that will not be indicated on the meter in the taxi. There is also a surcharge at night and on Sundays and public holidays.

- **By Bus**

Before you take the bus you should buy a ticket. Most buses have automatic ticket machines on board, but not all of them do. When you exit the station, turn to your right. You will find the ATC office next to the line of taxis. Purchase a bus ticket (un biglietto per l'autobus) for €1.30 at a *Tabacchi* shop or for €1.50 on board.

If the ATC office is closed, try the newspaper stand opposite the train station. If you decide to take the bus, you may want to leave your luggage at the train station. The *deposito bagagli* costs approximately €4 for the first five hours and each successive hour costs €0.60. Fees are payable

when you collect your belongings. Don't be surprised if you are asked to open your luggage before leaving it. It is a security check. Make sure you don't lose your deposit ticket.

Bus #32 will take you directly to SAIS Europe. The stop is across the street from the train station in front of the Hotel Mercure. When you get on the bus, you must validate your ticket in one of the grey machines found at the front or back of the bus. The ride takes 15 to 20 minutes and you can ask the driver to let you off at *Porta San Vitale*.

Bus #32 does not run after 8:30 pm in the evening, on Sundays or during Italian holidays. The #33 bus will also take you to the school and it stops right in front of the train station. Again, the stop is *Porta San Vitale* but this time the trip will take about 30/40 minutes. Remember that during the month of September, SAIS Europe will be closed after 8 pm on weekdays and all day on Saturdays and Sundays. If you arrive when the school is closed you should go directly to your hotel.

### ***Arriving by Car***

It is very difficult to keep/park a car in Bologna if you are not a resident. Obtaining residence status (not to be confused with the '*permesso di soggiorno*') takes at least three months but usually more. Non-residents may not enter the city center during the day time. The main entrances to the city are controlled electronically and fines are heavy. Parking is also difficult to find. Most available spaces are reserved for residents and the limited spaces available for non-residents outside the old 'city wall' are very expensive. Nevertheless, if you plan to bring your car with you at the beginning of the year, the following information may be useful.

Bologna is linked directly to three main motorways (*autostrade*): A1 (Milan-Naples), A13 (Venice-Bologna) and A14 (Bologna-Taranto). The A1 is linked to the *Brennero autostrada* (A22) just north of *Modena*. All of these *autostrade* lead to the city bypass (*tangenziale*), from which you should follow signs indicating *Centro* or city center. It is advisable to get a [Bologna street map](#) that indicates the

numerous one-way streets. Try searching “11 via Belmeloro, Bologna” on <http://maps.google.com>.

**IMPORTANT:**

**Do not leave your belongings, especially car radios and electronic equipment, in a parked car. They attract thieves!**