

International stu-
dents handbook



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Related documents: see items [2] to [4] (Development Plan, Faculty Statute, Administration and Governance) in “References”, section 6. Preamble

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1 Checklist before leaving your country of residence

- **Passport** (including a copy of the page containing your photo and personal details)
- **Visa** (if required) – 2 different concepts (D-visa & permit) D-Visa is a visa that is pasted into your passport and allows you to enter Switzerland and apply for a permit. The permit (most likely L-permit) for education is a plastic card that will be valid until next September when you will need to apply for a new one. Note: After collecting the visa from your embassy, you will have approximately 10 weeks to enter Switzerland and apply for a permit.
The permit will cost you around CHF 180. This amount is to be paid when you receive the card physically, not when submitting the documents at the Migration Office. Note: some countries have different rules about permanent residency permits (even temporary ones), and you may need to inform your government about your temporary residency permit and foreign bank account.
- **Confirmation of registration at Constructor Institute** (received as part of your visa application).
- **Copy of your birth certificate** (if available) or marriage certificate.
- **European Health Insurance Card** (for EU/EFTA citizens).
- **Health insurance:** Letter from your **health insurance** company verifying your coverage and detailed documentation of that coverage (for non-EU/EFTA citizens, if applicable). If not, non-EU/EFTA students will apply for insurance in Switzerland.
- **Liability insurance certificate**, if you have one.
- **Passport photos** (can be used for your residence permit, etc.)

After arriving in Schaffhausen:

- Register at the appropriate city district office, either in Schaffhausen or in Neuhausen **(to be done within 14 days of arrival)**.
- Take out **health insurance within 90 days** (after you receive your ID from the Migration Office) at [swiss-care.com](https://www.swiss-care.com)
- **Swiss Francs or CHF** (Please note: Switzerland is not in the EU and although Euros are accepted in some stores, the exchange rate you will receive will not be to your advantage).
- Consider downloading the app for the Swiss train system from www.sbb.ch/en
- **Adapters for devices** (220 kV) with the appropriate plugs (compare what you have with the picture below – the front part of the plugs have to be thin to enter the socket).



2 Arriving in Switzerland: practical information

- After collecting your luggage, follow the signs to the rail station in Zurich airport. Take the train from the airport (Zurich Airport ground floor) to Schaffhausen (approximately 1 hour travel time to Schaffhausen).
- NOTE: you CANNOT purchase a ticket once on board the train. **If you travel on Swiss trains without a valid ticket, you will be fined a minimum of CHF 100. Do not risk it!**
- If you plan on taking the **bus** to the Youth Hostel after arriving in Schaffhausen, purchase a ticket from the Zurich train station to “Schaffhausen Schützenhaus”. Your ticket will be valid for the entire journey (you cannot purchase a ticket once on board the train unless you have the SBB app).
- To purchase a ticket in advance and online, go to: www.sbb.ch/en/abos-billette.html
- The **S-24** train (*direction Thaygen*) goes directly to Schaffhausen (without changing trains) every hour on the :57. Please check the train schedule at www.sbb.ch/en
- **If you are staying at the Youth Hostel**, visit www.youthhostel.ch/en/hostels/schaffhausen/ for more information.
- Take the bus (or taxi) from Schaffhausen train station to the Youth Hostel (“Jugendherberge”). Buses 3, 4 & 6 run regularly (every 10 minutes) to the Schaffhausen Youth Hostel. Disembark at the “Schützenhaus”. The Youth Hostel is about a 350-meter walk.
- Address for the Youth Hostel: **Randenstrasse 65, 8200 Schaffhausen, Switzerland**. Email: schaffhausen@youthhostel.ch or Tel.: 41-52-625-88-00

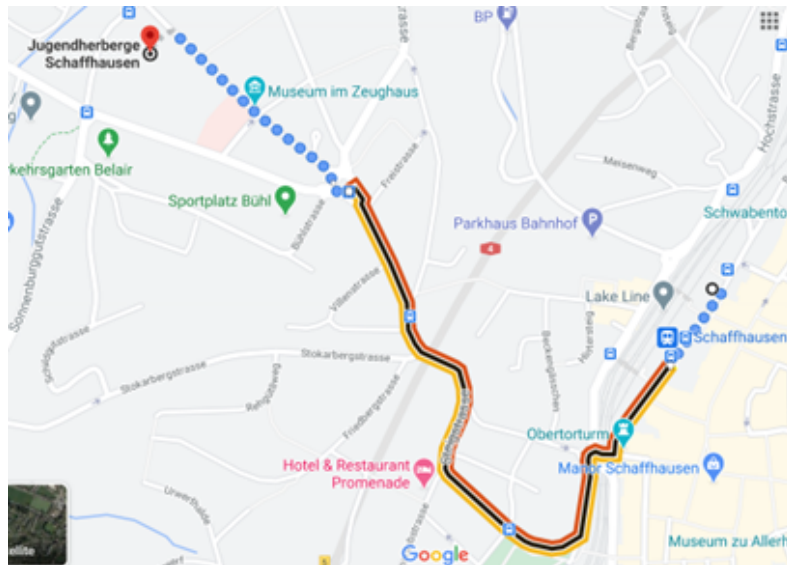


Figure 1: Map showing the bus route/directions to the Youth Hostel in Schaffhausen

3 Apartments in Neuhausen for students

- Constructor Institute has a couple of apartments, that students may use. Constructor Institute does not have enough apartment for all students. These are attributed on a first-come first-serve basis.
- The apartments are located in Neuhausen (directly adjacent to Schaffhausen) at **Poststrasse 1** and **Zentralstrasse 57, 8212 Neuhausen am Rheinfall, Switzerland**.
- Near the apartments, there is a grocery store, bank, post office, and bus stop.
- From the apartments, it is a 20-minute walk along the river to the Constructor Institute Schaffhausen premises or a 6-minute bus ride.




Figure 2: Location of student apartments in relation to Constructor offices

4 Registration at the Residency office or the Einwohnermeldeamt

Regardless of whether you require an entry visa or not, you must have a residence permit for your period of study in Switzerland. You must apply for this in person **within 14 days of your arrival** at the Citizen's Registry Office ("Einwohnermeldeamt") at your new place of residence. You will be asked for the following documents:

- Your **passport** or identity card.
- A copy of your **entry authorization**.
- Your **rental contract for accommodation** for Constructor apartments (will be sent to residency office in advance).
- CHF 20 (registration fee).
- CHF 65 (EU-countries) / CHF 162 (non-EU countries) (document fee).
- Copy of **birth and/or marriage certificate** (if applicable).
- Your **insurance card** or information (if you have it).
- **Anmeldeformular Ausländer** (for non-EU/EFTA residents) available for download.
- You will then receive an invitation from the Migration Office.
- At the Migration Office, you will register your biometric data.

After a few weeks, you will receive your residence permit by post. **The decision regarding the type of study permit you receive lies with the Migration Office.**

<p>Students residing in the Constructor sponsored apartments, must register at the residency office in Neuhausen am Rheinfall. Please check the opening hours and ring the bell to enter. www.neuhausen.ch</p>	
<p>If you will reside in the city of Schaffhausen, register at the following residency office:</p>	
 <p>Einwohnerkontrolle Zentralstrasse 52 CH-8212 Neuhausen am Rheinfall Contact: Sofie Della Pietra Sachbearbeiterin Einwohnerkontrolle Phone +41 52 674 22 30 Fax. +41 52 674 22 33 Einwohnerkontrolle@neuhausen.ch Sofie.DellaPietra@neuhausen.ch</p>	<p>Einwohnerkontrolle Schaffhausen, Safrangasse 8, 8200 Schaffhausen Email: Denise.Rossi@stsh.ch</p>

5 Leaving Switzerland: information for all students (EU & non-EU nationals)

5.1 Short-term trips outside Switzerland

During your studies, you are entitled to leave Switzerland for periods shorter than 3 months (for L permit holders) and 6 months (for B permit holders) respectively. However, if students leave Switzerland for a period longer than the one stated above, the authorities may consider that their permit has become invalid and cancel it. In this case, a permit will be terminated even if the student has not completed their studies and wishes to resume it.

5.2 Leaving the country after finishing your studies

All students (both EU and non-EU nationals) are required to deregister with the local authorities upon the completion of their studies and once the arrangements to leave the country are made. Please note that you have to go in person to your local residents' registration office and inform them about your date of departure from Switzerland up to 4 weeks ahead of the departure date. There is no exit tax for leaving Switzerland, but local authorities require that you follow this procedure strictly. You will be provided with a deregistration document that you might have to show to border controls when departing the country.

6 Banking

Constructor Institute Schaffhausen has relationships with both UBS and Credit Suisse. After you receive your residence permit, you will be able to open a bank account at either bank.

For more information on this process, please contact Markus Aebi at mae@constructor.org.

7 Mandatory health insurance in Switzerland

We suggest you apply for health insurance as soon as possible after your arrival. Although there are many options for health insurance, we recommend applying with [swisscare.com](https://www.swisscare.com) as they offer inexpensive and quality products for students (insurance costs around CHF 65-85 per year).

8 Living in Switzerland

8.1 Finding an apartment in Schaffhausen

Schaffhausen (and neighboring Neuhausen) offer many different housing options. Additionally, the Institute has several apartments for students available on a first-come, first-served basis.

- it3.immobilien/mieten
- www.homegate.ch/en
- www.wincasa.ch/en-us/home-en
- www.students.ch

For support in your housing search, please contact your MSc Program Manager. In Switzerland, your monthly rent should not exceed 1/3 of your income (e.g., scholarship and other funds). In addition, your landlord may expect you to pay a deposit equivalent to two or three months' rent. Some landlords may allow you to have insurance instead (e.g. www.swisscaution.ch), but you must inquire with the landlord first.

8.2 Keys from an apartment or an office building

Keys are very important in Switzerland. If you are provided with a key to an apartment or a building, guard it among your most precious possessions and make sure to return it on time before you leave. This rule applies to apartments rented privately, but also to any Constructor-managed apartment or building (e.g.: keys to our

offices).

Part of the reason this is so important is that many Swiss buildings use a key system in which each key is “programmed” to open a specified set of locks – for example to a specific apartment, its associated mailbox, the building’s main entrance, some common areas, maybe a specific cellar.

Fines for not returning a key (justified by the possible need to change the corresponding locks) are expensive – we have seen cases in which they reach 1000 CHF or more – and are enforced. Please keep this in mind and make sure you return the key before your departure.

8.3 Recycling

The Swiss have high standards when it comes to recycling. Recycling not only helps the environment but also saves you money (as garbage bags must be purchased, and for each garbage bag, you may need a sticker). In Switzerland, we recycle the following items separately:

- Glass (brown glass, green glass, white glass)
- Cardboard
- Paper (separate from cardboard!)
- PET bottles
- Other plastic packaging (usually, there is a dedicated bin at the supermarket)
- Batteries (also usually at the supermarket)
- Greens

8.4 Ventilation

Switzerland experiences humid summers and moderately cold winters, making regular ventilation of any apartment essential. It is recommended to open the windows one to three times a day for approximately three to five minutes to allow fresh air in and release humidity. For optimal results, open windows on opposite sides of the house simultaneously to improve air circulation. Just be cautious of doors slamming! ;-)

8.5 Transport

Switzerland has a well-connected and punctual transportation network that is known for being clean but expensive. If you plan to use it frequently at a lower cost, consider getting a half fare card. For individuals under 25 years old, it costs CHF 120 per year, and for those above 25 years old, it costs CHF 180 per year. Another option is to obtain a family card if you are here with your family. Additionally, if you are under 25 years old, you can purchase the "seven25 Travelcard" for CHF 400 per year, allowing free travel after 7 pm.

If you are looking for a bike, you might want to check Facebook Marketplace, where bikes are usually available starting from CHF 60. :)

8.6 Mobile phones

There are various expensive options (up to CHF 80) and options with 2/1-year contracts. Our current students recommend Swype - www.swype.ch - which costs CHF 20 per month for unlimited internet, calls, and SMS within Switzerland. An additional option of +3 CHF per day allows for international use.

8.7 Food

In Switzerland, local stores are ranked in order of highest to lowest prices as follows: Coop, Migros, Prima, Denner, Aldi, Lidl. On average, food expenses per person amount to approximately CHF 350-400 per month.

8.8 Cost of living (per month)

~up to CHF 1000	rent
~CHF 350	food
~CHF 20	mobile
~CHF 80	insurance
~CHF 200	transport

9 Important contacts: phone numbers

Emergency Calls		Constructor contacts	
Police	117	Prof. Mauro Pezze (for urgent issues only)	+41 79 684 68 00
Fire	118	Prof. Bertrand Meyer (for urgent issues only)	+41 79 275 53 29
Ambulance	144	Anna Maksimiuk (for urgent issues only)	+4 78 721 97 61
European emergency number	112		

For general inquiry calls from Germany or Austria, the number must be preceded by the following dialing code: 0041 848 800 xxx (e.g., 1811 or 162). Addresses and phone numbers can be easily found online at: www.local.ch.

10 Key contacts for common issues

- **Office and Facilities**
Contact Person: **Anna Maksimiuk** ama@constructor.org
All questions related to office operations, working hours, building access, and room bookings.
- **Academic Process and Schedule**
Contact Person: Flavia Trifa, flavia.trifa@constructor.org
Questions about the academic process: schedules, courses, and class registration.
- **Scholarships and Financial Issues**
Contact Person: Alexander Schoenenberger, Alexander.Schoenenberger@constructor.org
Everything related to scholarship payments, bank transfers, and resolving payment delays.
- **Tuition Payment**
Contact Person: Alexander Schoenenberger, Alexander.Schoenenberger@constructor.org
Information on tuition payments, available payment plans, and obtaining receipts.
- **Immigration Matters**
Contact Person: Flavia Trifa, flavia.trifa@constructor.org
Questions regarding visas, registration, and residency for international students.
- **Apartments**
Contact Person: Flavia Trifa, flavia.trifa@constructor.org
Questions about dormitory living, booking accommodations, move-in procedures, and maintenance.
- **Technical Support**
Contact Person: Constructor Help Desk, helpdesk@constructor.org
Questions about access to university systems, password recovery, Wi-Fi, and IT services.
- **Technical Support**
Contact Person: Constructor Help Desk, helpdesk@constructor.org
Questions about access to university systems, password recovery, Wi-Fi, and IT services.
- **Events and Student Initiatives**
Contact Person: Flavia Trifa flavia.trifa@constructor.org
Organizing events, participating in student clubs, proposing new events and initiatives.
- **Internships and Career Services**
Contact Person: Flavia Trifa flavia.trifa@constructor.org
Questions about internships, career consultations, and university resources for career growth.

11 Compliance with policies, procedures, and standards

Constructor Institute policies, procedures, and standards, as modified from time to time, are published on the Constructor website, located at institute.constructor.org. Students are expected to be aware of and comply with all applicable policies, procedures, and standards (including academic and disciplinary standards). Additionally, students must adhere to any requirements specified in their official admission letter for the Program.

12 A few words in Swiss German

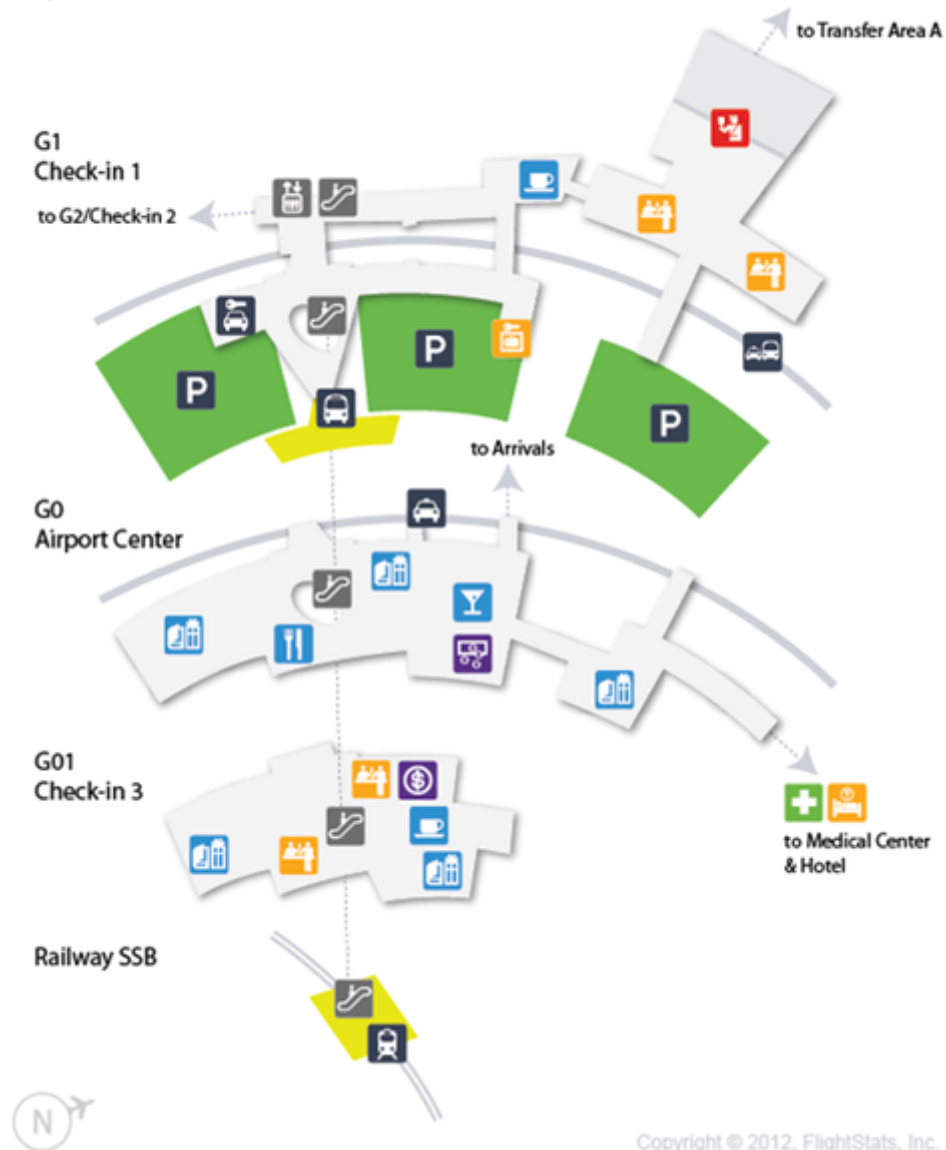
Hello – Guten Tag / Grüezi	Beer – Bier / Bier
Goodbye – Auf Wiedersehen / Adieu	Wine – Wein / Wii
Yes – Ja / Ja	Chocolate – Schokolade / Schoggi
No – Nein / Nei	Menu – Menü / Menü
Please – Bitte / Bitte	Today – Heute / Hütt
Thank you – Danke / Merci	Tomorrow – Morgen / Morn
My name is... – Mein Name ist... / Min Name isch...	Yesterday – Gestern / Geschter
How are you? – Wie geht es Dir? / Wie gaht's?	Monday – Montag / Mäntig
I'm very well – Es geht mir gut / Es gaht mir guet	Tuesday – Dienstag / Zischtig
I feel ill – Es geht mir schlecht / Es gaht mir schlächt	Wednesday – Mittwoch / Mittwuch
How much does it cost? – Was kostet das? / Was choschtet das?	Thursday – Donnerstag / Dunschtig
Do you speak English? – Sprechen Sie Englisch? / Reded Si Änglisch?	Friday – Freitag / Friitig
I don't understand – Ich verstehe nicht / Ich verstah nöd	Saturday – Samstag / Samschtig
Where is ...? – Wo ist... / Wo isch ...?	Sunday – Sonntag / Sunntig
Entrance – Eingang / ligang	One – Eins / Eis
Exit – Ausgang / Usgang	Two – Zwei / Zwei
Danger – Achtung / Achtung	Three – Drei / Drü
Open – Offen / Offe	Four – Vier / Vier
Closed – Geschlossen / Gschlosse	Five – Fünf / Foif
Toilets – /restrooms Toilette / WC	Six – Sechs / Sächs
Doctor – Arzt / Arzt	Seven – Sieben / Sibe
Bicycle – Fahrrad / Velo	Eight – Acht / Acht
Hotel – Hotel / Hotel	Nine – Neun / Nüün
Restaurant – Restaurant / Restaurant	Ten – Zehn / Zää
	One hundred – Hundert / Hundert
	One thousand – Tausend / Tuusig

A quick and amusing guide to the Swiss German language can be found at: www.eldrid.ch/switzerland.htm.

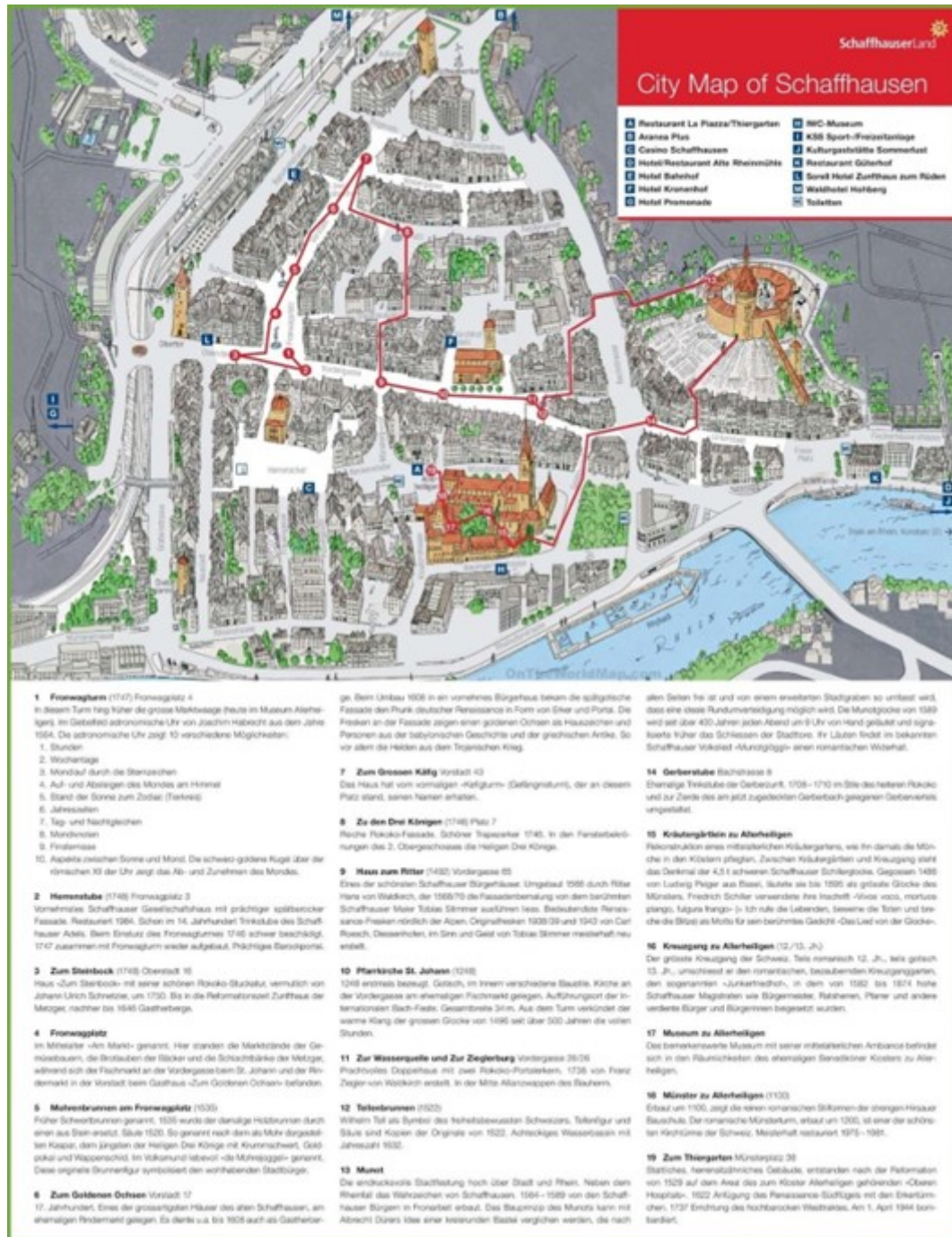
13 Map of Zurich airport

Zurich Airport

Airport Center/Check-in 1 & 3



14 Map of Schaffhausen (old town)



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