**INTERNATIONAL STAFF**

**Detailed information about living and working in Estonia can be found here:**

**Euraxess**

<https://www.euraxess.ee/information/search/field_service_category/living-europe-1221/country/estonia-1069>

**Work in Estonia**

<https://www.workinestonia.com/>

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**General conditions**

International staff is considered a lecturer with a foreign citizenship, who at the moment of applying for grant form ASTRA project, has not been working in an academic post in Estonia for more than ten months during the past five years.

An international lecturer will work under the same contract of employment as Estonian lecturers. The only difference is that the contract is bilingual – in Estonian and English language.

Direct taxes are withheld from the salary automatically by the employer. Direct taxes are income tax, social tax and unemployment tax. In Estonia, all the insured employees paying the social tax have the Estonia health insurance.

The College provides accommodation at our student hostel. Please find general information about the student hostel and prices [here](http://ttk.ee/en/student-hostel-0).

Expenses for food and public transport are covered by the lecturer him- or herself. What concerns transport then all **registered residents of Estonia**are entitled the **right of free travel by Tallinn public transport.** In order to travel free of charge, you need to register yourself as a resident of Tallinn in the Public Register (instructions you can find under the section “After arrival”) and:

* purchase a [Smartcard](http://www.tallinn.ee/est/pilet/yhiskaart) (est) for the price of 2 €. The cards can be purchased in various [points of sale](https://www.pilet.ee/cgi-bin/splususer/splususer.cgi?op=info&file=kuidasosta_muugipunktid.html);
* personalise the card for 1 € at the point of sale or for free at [www.pilet.ee/yhiskaart](https://www.pilet.ee/viipe/uhiskaart/persod/perso/?lang=en);
* validate your journey with the Public Transport Card immediately after entering the public transport vehicle.

# Staff Checklist

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Checklist for international staff members coming from abroad for taking the necessary steps when preparing to move to Estonia and get started.  
  
**Before arrival:**

* apply for visa or residence permit [if you need](http://vm.ee/en/who-does-not-need-visa-visit-estonia) one. Accompanying family members should apply at the same time, even if they arrive in later.
* book your housing before arrival
* ensure a [medical insurance](https://www.euraxess.ee/information/content/estonia/health-social-security) (recommended)
* plan on family mattes, if necessary (day care, school) (recommended)

**After arrival:**

* register you place of residence: [EU-citizens long term stay](https://www.euraxess.ee/estonia/information-assistance/entry-conditions-and-residence-permits) or [Non-EU Citizens long term stay](https://www.euraxess.ee/estonia/information-assistance/entry-conditions-and-residence-permits)
* purchase a [Smartcard](http://www.tallinn.ee/est/pilet/yhiskaart) to be entitled the right of free travel by Tallinn public transport
* get your employment contract
* activate your IT user account and e-mail in the College
* get acquainted with the [tax system](https://www.euraxess.ee/estonia/information-assistance/taxation)
* open a [bank account](https://www.euraxess.ee/estonia/information-assistance/opening-bank-account) (optional)
* register for a [family physician](https://www.euraxess.ee/node/104709/)
* [Register your car](https://www.euraxess.ee/node/104710/) at the Estonian Vehicle Registration Centre, if necessary.

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# Entry and Residence

Different rules apply to citizens of EU and to citizens of third countries regarding residence and working in Estonia. The length of the stay also influences which rules have to be followed.  
  
[EU citizens](https://www.euraxess.ee/estonia/information-assistance/entry-conditions-and-residence-permits) are free to enter Estonia, but if they stay for more than 3 months, they should register their place of residence and apply for an ID-card.   
  
[Non-EU Citizens](https://www.euraxess.ee/estonia/information-assistance/entry-conditions-and-residence-permits)(third countries) may need a visa for short-term visits (up to 6 months). Citizens of third countries need a residence permit for employment for long term work (more than 6 months) in Estonia.  
  
Applications for visas, residence permits or residence permits for employment should be submitted to a diplomatic [representation of the Republic of Estonia](http://vm.ee/en/embassies-and-representations). Registration of one’s place of residence is necessary in the case of longer visits for EU citizens as well as citizens of third countries.

**Taxation**

Estonian taxation system is considered to be simple and liberal. Compared to most European countries, the major difference is that income tax has only one general flat rate. Direct taxes are withheld from the salary automatically by the employer.  
  
Direct taxes are:

* income tax
* unemployment insurance
* funded pension payment

Income tax is 20%, and there is a monthly unemployment insurance tax of 1,6%, which is deducted from your salary by your employer.  
  
A funded pension payment is withheld from your salary at a rate of 2%, if you have joined the optional funded pension system.  
  
Read more about taxation from Euraxess website <https://www.euraxess.ee/>

Other taxes

* As of January 2015, **income tax** is 20%, and there is a monthly **unemployment insurance** tax of 1,6%, which is deducted from your salary by your employer.
* A **funded pension payment** is withheld from your salary at a rate of 2%, if you have joined the optional funded pension system. You can read more about it in the **Pensions** section.
* As of January 2016, the sum of 170 euros from the monthly salary is income tax free for Estonian residents. You must ask your employer to take the income tax free sum into account monthly for salary payments. Income tax is not charged on compensation for official travel, accommodation and daily allowances, if these are within the limits established by the law.
* **Social tax** is paid by employers at a rate of 33% on all payments made to employees for salaried work performed, as well as an extra 0,8% unemployment insurance. Social tax is not part of the salary number; it is calculated on the basis of the agreed (gross) salary. 13% of the social tax goes to the Health Insurance Fund and 20% goes to pension insurance.
* Estonia has **agreements** [**to avoid double taxation**](http://www.fin.ee/overview-of-estonian-bilateral-conventions-for-avoidance-of-double-taxation-and-prevention-of-fiscal-evasion/?highlight=double) **with many countries**, incl. all EU member states. Some of these agreements have more favorable conditions for researchers or professors so check the agreement with your home country.
* **Income tax returns of 2016** must be presented to the Estonian Tax and Customs Board **by 31st of March 2017**. See other important dates for persons submitting income tax returns [**here**](http://www.emta.ee/eng/private-client) . See more info in **Income tax returns** tab below.
* The most important of the indirect taxes is the value-added tax (**VAT**), which is 20% (from 1 July 2009) for most goods. The VAT for some goods, such as books, medicines etc., is 9%. There are also more indirect taxes for gambling, tobacco products and alcohol.

# Opening a bank account

**Opening a bank account** is rather simple in Estonia. You can do so at the nearest bank office; all you need is a personal identification document.

In addition to cash, **debit and credit cards are accepted** in most shops, restaurants and companies. Salary payments are usually made to a person’s bank account. **The ATMs** of the larger banks can be found in branch offices, petrol stations, larger supermarkets and other frequently visited places. **Internet banking is very common**, whereas cheques are seldom used in Estonia.

It is also advisable to learn about the conditions for **closing the bank account**, if needed, and take care of all the necessary procedures in time, as this may turn out to be rather complicated later, after leaving the country.

For short term stays in Estonia, please note that the banks have rather high fees for opening an account in case a person does not have a local ID (situation in 2016). In case you are asked to provide an Estonian bank account number for receiving your stipend or similar, please discuss the possible solutions with the contact person at your institution, if needed.

The three larger banks in Estonia for private customers are:

* [Swedbank](https://www.swedbank.ee/private?language=ENG)    
  for Estonian and EU member state (including Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Switzerland) resident free of charge; 200 EUR for another country resident
* [SEB](http://www.seb.ee/eng)   
  for Estonian and EU member state (including Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Switzerland) resident free of charge; 250 EUR for another country resident
* [Nordea](http://www.nordea.ee/Private%2bcustomers/66602.html)   
  for Estonian and EU member state (including Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Switzerland) resident free of charge; 250 EUR for another country resident