

## **ARRIVAL IN BRA:** **Settling In – Useful Information**

**DISCLAIMER:** The University is not responsible for ensuring the absolute veracity of this document. Rather, it is the student's responsibility to verify the information provided directly with the relevant authorities.

Use your first morning in Bra to familiarize yourself with the city. Get an idea of where you want to live. If you think you would like to live in Pollenzo, take the bus down to get a feel for it.

### **LOCATIONS TO MAKE PHOTOCOPIES IN BRA:**

- Business Space (Via Principi di Piemonte, 17, 12042 Bra);
- Centro Copie Braidese (Via Guala Ernesto 4, 12042 Bra);
- Ferrera Claudio (Corso Garibaldi 12, 12042 Bra);
- Mailboxes Etc. (Via Adua, 4/A, 12042 Bra);
- In Pollenzo at the University by first obtaining your UNISG copy card.

**We suggest making double copies of all your documents, as officials may unexpectedly request more than one.**

### **Codice Fiscale**

Agenzia delle Entrate: [Via Monte di Pietà, 5](#)

Open from Monday through Friday, 8.30 A.M. to 12.30 P.M.

Please see the “Establishing your legal status in Italy” document, available [here](#), for more information on obtaining your Italian fiscal code or *codice fiscale*, as banks will require this in order to set up your account. Similarly, phone and internet providers will also require that you have a codice fiscale and Italian bank account in order to activate your service.

### **Setting Up A Bank Account**

**We generally recommend the University's partner banking institution [Intesa Sanpaolo](#) in Bra as the best place to set up their account**, as they are one of the oldest and largest banks in Italy, have two branches in the middle of the city, and offer free or discounted accounts to UNISG students. Moreover, their central branch in Via Principi di Piemonte 30 is virtually the only bank in the city open evenings and Saturday mornings.

Whether you find an apartment in advance, or begin your apartment search upon arrival, plan on spending your first two weeks in Bra in a bed and breakfast, hotel, AirBnB or couch surfing arrangement. This will give you enough time to find a place before classes begin. We recommend either [Bed&Bra](#), [Ombra della Collina](#), [Viot d'l Forn](#), [Villa Maddalena](#), or [this place in Via Cavour](#).



### **At the Agency**

**Important notice for those renting with roommates: remember that any agreement made between roommates not written into an apartment contract is not legally binding.**

When you visit the agency, have an idea of how much you want to spend on rent and where you want to live. You will want to be relatively close to the bus line to Pollenzo. The agency will then set up viewings of apartments meeting your economic and geographic parameters.

Once you have settled on an apartment, the agency will draw up the lease agreement. Contracts in Italy can be for 12-18 months (*contratto transitorio*) or for four years. Do not be alarmed by this. You can break your lease at any time, with three months' prior notice for the transitory contracts and six months' prior notice for the four-year contract (see the section on Moving Out).

At the signing of the apartment lease agreement, you will need to pay the first month's rent, the last two months' rent, and the agency's fee.\* Agencies accept payment in Euros, Italian bank checks, or money wire. If you plan to pay in cash, remember that most banks have a limit on how much you can withdraw each day, so check with your bank for these limits prior to your departure for Italy.

If you have someone from your home country who can wire the money directly, you should probably consider doing so. Check with your bank prior to leaving to find out the procedure for wiring money to an Italian account.

### **Garbage and Recycling Services**

Barcoded trash bags, which are mandatory for the disposal of non-recyclable household waste in Bra, can be obtained at the city *EcoSportello*, located in Palazzo Garrone in Piazza dei Caduti. Bra inhabitants must show proof of having paid the city garbage tax. In some cases, your landlord may register and obtain bags on your behalf, but is not legally obliged to do so. Should you need to register on your own behalf, you would need to pay the garbage tax directly by going to the city tax office or *Ufficio Tributi*, also located in the inner courtyard of Palazzo Garrone in Piazza dei Caduti. Their office can be accessed through the inner courtyard entrance, between the courthouse and the tourist information center. More information regarding waste and recycling in Bra can be found [here](#) online.

### **Rent and Utility Payments**

**Important notice for those renting with roommates: remember that your utility provider will hold the account holder, and not the apartment tenants, responsible for any unpaid bills.**

To avoid unpleasant surprises, we strongly advise you to close your account at the utility provider's office when vacating your apartment. Alternatively, you can also transfer your utility account on a specific date to an incoming tenant. Many agencies are closed in August. Therefore, we recommend closing your account by the end of July, should you be planning to move out during the summer.

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\* These terms may vary depending on the agency, but regardless you should be prepared to pay several months' worth of rent.



Your rent will be due monthly on the date specified in your lease. You may be able to pre-pay several months' rent in advance, should this be to your advantage. Discuss these options directly with your landlord and / or your real estate agency.

You will receive your utility bills, in your name, every two months. You will also receive a garbage / recycling collection bill of approximately 15 Euros per month, most likely in your property owner's name. You can pay all bills at the post office. Simply take the bill with you, along with the necessary funds, in cash, and pay at the bill-pay window. Alternatively, you can also pay some utility bills at your bank – either directly or through an automatic bill-pay system (ask your bank for details) – or at some bars with electronic lottery machines.

As utilities in Italy can be expensive, below are some suggestions to help cut down on these costs:

- Keep your water heater at a low setting. This will prevent you from taking long showers and cut down on gas heating costs;
- Since winter heating costs are responsible for your highest utility bills, keep your thermostat at a cooler temperature and bundle up in extra sweaters and socks;
- Run your dishwasher on the energy efficient setting and only run it when it is completely full;
- If the outlets are accessible, unplug appliances when they are not in use (this includes your television, dishwasher, washing machine, and cell phone charger). Appliances continue to draw electricity even when they are on stand-by mode;
- Turn off lights when you leave a room.

For advice on **closing utility contracts**, please see the “Moving Out” section below.

### **Maintenance**

Discuss maintenance issues with your agency/landlord and if possible, have them fixed prior to signing your lease. Under Italian law, you can expect to be charged for minor maintenance costs (e.g. replacing light bulbs) and minor repair costs (e.g. having the plumber fix your washing machine); your landlord, on the other hand, must cover more extensive costs (e.g. replacing a broken refrigerator, dealing with water damage / mold issues).

### **Phone Line, Internet Access and Cell Phone Coverage**

**IMPORTANT:** Generally, phone and internet providers will require that you have a *codice fiscale* and Italian bank account in order to activate your service.

Your new apartment will most likely come equipped with a landline and you can easily get an ADSL internet connection.

There are four main providers of cell phone coverage here in Italy: Vodafone, 3 Mobile, Wind and TIM. There are also other companies, such as Tiscali and Fastweb, that can be considered "virtual" providers, as they rent time on other providers' networks (i.e. cell towers), though they don't own any cellular infrastructure themselves.



The advantage of The Big 4 is that they all have brick and mortar locations, so if you have problems activating your SIM, you can take your phone to a physical location in Bra to have the situation looked at by a professional.

I suggest you check out [www.sostariffe.it](http://www.sostariffe.it) to help you decide which plan is best for you. I recommend getting a pay-as-you go cell plan with, or without a high-speed home internet connection (depending on whether or not you plan to stream video at home).

When choosing an internet provider, be especially wary of activation costs, modem "rental" fees, promotional monthly rates that jump after a certain number of months and account closure fees. You should be looking for "*attivazione gratis*" and "*prezzo fisso per sempre*" as key words in your search. As an economic goal, try to aim for a cell plan that costs no more than €14 per month and a 20 MBPS (or more) ADSL/Fiber plan that costs no more than €35 per month.

Usually, there is at least one of the Big 4 offering free activation and fixed rates at any given time during the year.

Note: high-speed "*fibra*" Internet can take upwards of 6 weeks to be installed. Contracts are usually only offered for a minimum of 4 years. Portable WiFi contracts, on the other hand, may be obtained for 24 months – they offer less data, but the advantage is that their activation is immediate. Be aware that if they give you a promotion where the modem is a "gift", you might need to pay for it (around 50 Euro) if you leave the contract early. There is also an additional penalty for leaving the contract early (around 35 Euro).

### **Electrical Adaptors**

Please use the correct power and plug adaptors for all electric devices. Failing to do so may create a short-circuit and power failure in your apartment. Adaptors are available at most supermarkets, or at the hardware store at 175 via Vittorio Emanuele, in Bra.

### **Mail and Packages**

The University will not accept postal correspondence of any kind on behalf of students. All letters and packages should be sent to students' home addresses.

Alternatively, you can have packages delivered to the post office in either Bra or Pollenzo by indicating ***Fermo Posta***, and **not you, as the recipient, followed by the post office address**. For Amazon packages, select the post office as the pick-up point or *punto di ritiro* during online checkout. **That said, you must always include your name somewhere on the waybill, either in the reference, subject or attn. sections. Otherwise, the Post Office will not be able to release the package to you.** It is in any case your responsibility to determine whether a package has arrived and pick it up, as the post office does not send out notifications. Unclaimed packages will be automatically returned to sender approximately 1 week following their arrival at the post office.

Other courier services may offer a similar service, though these options would need to be investigated independently.

Lastly, the company Fermopoint (<https://www.fermopoint.it/>) arranges package pick-ups and shipments through local retail stores for a small fee.

### **Customs Fees**

Attempt to verify whether customs fees will be applied, and the approximate amount due. To avoid having to pay unnecessary customs fees, make sure that the sender indicates “personal belongings” on the package, if the contents are not intended for resale.

We recommend using [this search engine](#) from the Italian Customs website for calculating customs fees, by following the pathway “Nomenclature”, “*Indice Taric*” clicking on the number corresponding to the description of the goods being imported, then “*Misure Importazione*”, selecting the “*paese*” or country of provenance. The “*Dazio paesi terzi*” number corresponds to the customs duties as a percentage of the total cost of the package + associated costs. The “*Imposta Valore Aggiunto*” indicates the VAT, which is applied on top of the total declared value of the merchandise + shipping costs + customs fees. The Italian post office adds an additional customs release fee of €5,50 for any package with a declared value over €22 (for invoiced shipments), or over €45 (for person-to-person shipments).

### **Moving Out**

Italian law requires you to provide three- or six-months’ notice prior to moving out of your apartment, depending on your contract. Be sure to notify your landlord in writing, either by sending a registered letter or by signing an official document in the presence of an agent at the real estate office.

**For those renewing their permits of stay “*in attesa occupazione*”**, be sure to establish residence prior to sending the registered letter terminating your contract, as you must have an active lease in order to obtain your certificate of residence. See the document entitled “Upon Graduation – Extending Your Stay in Italy” [here](#) on the Bureaucratic Procedures page of our website for more information.

**Important:** Many agencies are closed and property owners can be out of town in August. Therefore, we recommend terminating your contract by the end of July, should you be planning to move out during the summer. Also, inform your utility and internet providers prior to the last billing period (e.g. 30 to 60 days) to avoid paying beyond when will actually use these services.



**Closing Utility contracts:** prior to departing from Bra after your studies, shutting down a gas account will generally take 5 business days. The tenant needs to be present within that schedule window, so that the technician can come by to the apartment to check the meter. Alternatively, if there are new tenants coming into the apartment, it's worthwhile to transfer gas and light contracts to them, as you will not have to pay the deactivation (*disdetta*) fee, nor must you then be available for the technician's visit.

### **Helpful Addresses and Contacts**

Be sure to check opening hours ahead of time as many businesses in Bra are closed over lunch from noon until 2 P.M., in the evenings after 7 P.M., on Sundays, and sometimes on Mondays.

### **Useful Numbers**

- Ambulance 118
- Carabinieri (local police) 112
- Fire Department 115
- Police 113
- Dr. Livio Tibaldi (general medical doctor): +39 0172 431644 (office), +39 0172 1915185 (for appointments), 338 9131760 (urgent medical assistance)\*

Address: Via Montegrappa 15 – Bra

Office hours (Bra): Monday 3.30 P.M. – 6:30 P.M.; Tuesday 10:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.; Wednesday 10:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.; Thursday 3:30 P.M. – 6:30 P.M.; Friday 10:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.

Office hours (Pollenzo): Tuesday 2:00 P.M. – 2:30 P.M.: Via Margherita n. 30

\*See the “Student Health” document on the “Bureaucratic Procedures” page of the University website, found [here](#), for detailed information on health coverage, as well as the complete list of available doctors.

*Last updated August, 2019 - cw*