



VRIJE  
UNIVERSITEIT  
BRUSSEL

# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT GUIDE

2024 – 2025



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# I. PRACTICALITIES

## 1. BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

### A. VISA FORMALITIES

#### DO I NEED A VISA TO COME TO BELGIUM?

##### EEA nationals

If you are a national of a Member State of the European Union or Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein or Switzerland (EEA+ nationals) you can simply travel to Belgium with a valid international passport or identity card. You do not need to apply for a visa.

Upon arrival, you will have [to register at the town hall](#) of the municipality in which you will be residing.

##### Non-EEA nationals

After receiving the [standard form/standaardformulier](#) (= previous conditional acceptance letter) from VUB you can start applying for a visa. Apply through the competent diplomatic post in your country, either the Belgian embassy, consulate, VFS Global, TLS Contact, ... . The visa type is based on the duration of your studies:

- For stays up to 90 days: Apply for a type **C visa**.
- ➔ Please note that you will not receive a Belgian residence card when coming to Belgium with a visa type C. This means you will have to return to the home country after 90 days. The period cannot be prolonged!
- For stays longer than 90 days: Apply for a type **D visa**.
- ➔ Please note that this type of visa will allow you to receive a Belgian residence card which grants you the opportunity to stay in the country for the duration of 1 academic year. The residence card needs to be prolonged for every subsequent year of studies in Belgium.

Submit your complete visa application well in advance!

- Type C visa: Apply 2-3 months before the intended stay.
- Type D visa: Apply 4-5 months before the intended stay.

If there is no Belgian diplomatic post in your country of residence then please apply at [the designated competent diplomatic post](#).

Although procedures may differ from one Belgian diplomatic representation to another, the basic requirements for students applying for the type D visa are:

- A valid passport (passport should have at least two blank pages and be valid at least for another 12 months after the date of arrival)
  - 1 or more passport pictures
  - A certificate of good conduct
  - A copy of the birth certificate
  - [Medical certificate](#) delivered by a physician appointed by the Belgian diplomatic representation
  - Standard form (= Acceptance letter) from VUB
  - Proof of sufficient financial means (annex 32, blocked account statement, scholarship)
  - Proof of health insurance -> period might differ depending on the country of residence
  - Proof of payment visa fee ([not same as visa contribution fee](#))
  - Proof of payment visa [contribution fee!](#)
- ➔ The categories below receive an exemption from this fee:
- Students (Bachelor, Master or PhD) with scholarships from a Regional, Federal, European entity or issued by a by the government recognised institution of higher education (VUB);
  - Foreigner under 18 years of age;
  - A recognised stateless person who has lost his or her nationality against his or her will and who demonstrates that he or she cannot obtain a legal and permanent residence permit in another State with which he or she has ties.

**! There might be additional documents requested depending on the country of application and nationality. To know more, consult the webpage of the Belgian Immigration Office in your country.**

## B. ACCOMMODATION

### VUB HOUSING

VUB has 1,540 student rooms: 1,452 single rooms, 35 two-person flats, 12 studios and 6 rooms for students with a wheelchair. They are situated in and around the campuses in Etterbeek and Jette.

To qualify for a VUB room you will need to meet a number of [conditions](#):

- **You must be enrolled in a basic VUB programme**, so a bachelor's programme, an initial master's programme or a preparatory programme. Students on an advanced master, doctorate, postgraduate... may also rent a VUB room, but are not at the top of the priority list.
- **You study full-time under a diploma contract.** 'Full-time' means you take on at least 54 credits. Students on credit and/or exam contracts do not qualify.
- **You don't have a Flemish master's degree yet.**
- **You are a good tenant.** In other words, you have no outstanding rental payments and there are no reports of misconduct in the previous academic year.

You can apply for a room at VUB starting from **November 15th** until **end of April** for the upcoming academic year. As a future student you can apply for a VUB room along with your application for a study programme, the step-by-step guide is available [here](#).

**! The demand for VUB rooms outweighs the supply, submitting an application does not guarantee that you will actually get a room.**

### OTHER HOUSING OPTIONS

If you were not able to get a VUB room, you can choose from around 10,000 student residences offered by private owners.

#### PRIVATE STUDENT ROOMS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH VUB

- [MyKot](#)
- [Brik](#)
- [UpKot](#)
- [DiggIt \(diggItstudentlife.eu\)](#)
- [Brusselo XL](#)

## PRIVATE MARKET OPTIONS

The cost of sharing a private flat is around **€500 - 650 per month**. The rental market is competitive, many students look for suitable housing at the same time.

Some websites to get your search started:

- <https://www.appartager.be/>
- <https://www.immoweb.be/en>
- <https://ikot.be/en>
- <https://www.student.be/en>
- <https://immo.vlan.be/>
- <https://www.nestpick.com/brussels/>
- <https://housinganywhere.com/s/Brussels--Belgium>
- <https://www.spotahome.com>
- <https://rentola.be/en>

## DO YOU ALREADY HAVE A BELGIAN RESIDENCE PERMIT?

The social rent office for students located in Brussels, The S.V.K.S. , is a non-profit organisation that was set up by the Brussels Capital Region and Brussels higher education institutions. It is based on the principles of the Social Rental Offices (S.V.K.) but is exclusively for students.

The purpose is to enable students on a low income to rent a student residence in Brussels under the usual market price. To gain access to accommodation via the S.V.K.S., you will need to meet a number of conditions:

- Your income must not be above that permitted for social housing.
- You must be a full-time student in higher education and lawfully registered.
- You must be maximum 35 years old at the start of the first year of your higher education.
- Belgian ID

You can find more info via: [Prendre contact avec l'A.I.S.E. | A.I.S.E.-S.V.K.S. \(aise-svks.brussels\)](#).

# Tips to avoid scams when looking for accommodation

## 1. Pay careful attention to the housing ads

→ If the property is listed by a private owner, make sure you see the owner's surname, first name and telephone number.

*Be aware of any owner who only accepts to be contacted by text message, not by telephone.*

→ Check the exact address of the property and ask for several photos.

*Do a Google search by typing the property's address. Use the Street View function to visually check whether the listed property actually exists in the indicated place.*

→ Avoid ads that do not include photos of the property. Also, beware of overly appealing ads promising spacious, well-located housing for a low rental price.

*You should also be wary of ads with photos that look too perfect, straight out of a interior design magazine. You can check the photos from the ads by doing a reverse search on Google Images.*

→ If possible, visit the property together with the owner before signing the papers, and hand over the keys in person.

*Do not pay anything unless you have signed the rental contract and received the keys in person.*

## 2. Carefully read the rental contract and all its terms

→ To avoid future disagreement and litigation, make sure you sign a written rental contract detailing the terms and conditions of the rent.

*Read the contract carefully before signing and ask for clarifications if necessary.*

→ It is highly discouraged to hand over cash before you have signed a rental contract.

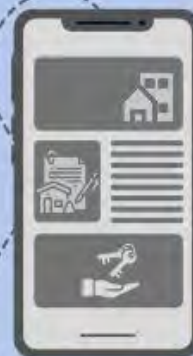
*If the owner or the real estate agency asks you to pay money to book a visit or to secure the accommodation, it is best to ignore this offer and look for other options.*

*Pay attention to the new 'Airbnb' scam, where scammers rent a property via Airbnb and then list it on local web sites as if they owned it. Then, they accept applications, visits, they answer to all kind of questions. Once they get the money, they completely vanish.*

**That's why it's important not to pay anything until you have the keys in your hand.**

*However, there are also cases where the scammers may give you the keys directly in your hand and after you pay, they disappear. Then you end up with the real owners of the Airbnb, who don't know what's going on either.*

**Check if the property you are interested in is not listed on Airbnb, and when you visit it, make sure the apartment does not have a key box at the entrance, or other details specific to a short-term homestay.**



## 3. The deposit procedures

→ Never pay a deposit before you have signed the rental contract.

*To reserve an accommodation, owners may ask you for a deposit, i.e. a sum paid as a guarantee, up to a maximum of one month's rent for unfurnished properties and two months' rent for furnished properties. However, it is illegal to ask for the deposit to be paid in advance.*

→ Remember that the owner must return the entire deposit to you when you leave, unless you made any damage to the property.

*It is important to make an inventory of goods together with the owner before you move in, and list anything that is damaged or broken. Don't forget to take photos.*

## C. COST OF LIVING IN BELGIUM

Living costs in Belgium are relatively high, we advise to prepare your budget before coming to Belgium. The below info may help you with your budget calculations.

### TUITION FEES

Tuition fees in Belgium are a bit lower than in other countries because the programmes are subsidised by the Flemish Government. Tuition fees are calculated by the number of credits you take, your nationality, the programme for which you enrol and the type of contract. The amount consists of a fixed part, which you pay once per academic year, and a variable part (based on amount of credits).

### OTHER COSTS

In addition to tuition fees, there are many other costs that you need to take into account as a student. You can check the cost of living in Brussels (CPI) at <https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/in/Brussels>

A budget of ca. **€ 1,000** per month, excluding your tuition fee and course materials, is sufficient to cover the basic costs.

|   |                                    |         |
|---|------------------------------------|---------|
| Accommodation   | €450 - €600                        | monthly |
| Energy costs  | €70 - €100                         | monthly |
| Food  | €200 - €250                        | monthly |
| Transportation  | €12 - €500                         | yearly  |
| Medical insurance (mandatory)                               | €14 - €100                         | monthly |
| Medical costs   | €25                                | monthly |
| Phone/internet  | €50                                | monthly |
| Other costs: clothes/fun stuff/personal hygiene             | €45                                | monthly |
| Equipment for the room (kitchen utensils, bed sheets, etc.) | €400                               | once    |
| Airport-city transfer (bus/train/taxi)                      | €7 - 60                            | once    |
| Deposit on accommodation                                    | 2 or 3 months of rent              | once    |
| Tuition fee   | EEA: ≈ €1,100<br>Non-EEA: ≈ €4,200 | yearly  |
| Study materials   | €150 - 200                         | yearly  |

**! Note that during the first month of your stay you will have exceptional costs for registration, copies of documents and often a warranty for your accommodation.**



## 2. STAYING IN BELGIUM

### A. ARRIVING IN BELGIUM

As the capital of the European Union and Belgium, Brussels is well-served by public transport. Most visitors will arrive by plane at one of two airports that serve the city: Brussels Airport (Zaventem) or Charleroi Airport (also known as Brussels South Airport). Getting from the airport to your accommodation is easy.

#### ARRIVING AT BRUSSELS AIRPORT (ZAVENTEM)

Brussels' main airport is very well connected to the city. It's located just 10km from the city centre. Taking the train from the airport takes around 17 minutes to reach city centre. The price for the ticket is around 10 EUR. You can also take a bus, which is a cheaper alternative, but it will take around 30-40 minutes before you arrive in the city centre. You could also opt to take a taxi. This will cost you around €50. This is also handy if you have a lot of luggage.

#### ARRIVING AT CHARLEROI AIRPORT (BRUSSELS SOUTH)

Charleroi Airport is not in Brussels; it is about 45km away. If you decide to get to Brussels by taxi, expect a fare of €100 or more. The best way to get to Brussels would be by bus. There is a shuttle bus that runs every 30 minutes from 3.30 AM onwards. Prices vary, so buying a ticket [online](#) is a good idea.

#### ARRIVING BY TRAIN

There are roughly 16 trains a day that go to and from major cities such as Paris and Amsterdam. The Eurostar train network connects Brussels with e.g. Germany, United Kingdom, Netherlands, and France. All international trains will terminate or stop in Gare du Midi (South Station). This is the biggest transit hub in Brussels.

#### ARRIVING BY CAR

Generally, all motorways in Belgium are toll-free. Motorway infrastructure is particularly good and well managed. The address of the university is Pleinlaan 2, 1050 Brussels or Boulevard de la Plaine 2, 1050 Bruxelles (= French).

### B. TOWNHALL REGISTRATION

Once you've arrived in Belgium, you must register at the local town or city hall in your place of residence and this as soon as possible after arrival.

- **You are staying in Belgium for less than three months:**

Non-EEA nationals need to declare their arrival at the local townhall. You will need to provide your passport with 3 photos.

EEA nationals are not required to report their arrival in case they are staying for less than 3 months.

- **You are staying in Belgium for more than three months:**

## EEA nationals

You will need to register at the town hall within three months after your arrival in Belgium. We advise registering as soon as possible. You'll have to make an appointment at the town hall of the municipality in which you reside. Keep in mind that the Brussels area is made up of [19 different municipalities](#), and each one has a different townhall – so be sure to check where you need to go. After your visit to the townhall the police will visit you at your residence to verify your address. Please make sure to add your name to the postbox and doorbell.

You will have to submit the required documents to the Foreigners' Desk of your townhall.

- Proof of enrolment (standard form 1)
- Sign a declaration on honor at the town hall that you have sufficient financial means to cover your costs during your studies.
- Proof of having a valid Belgian health insurance.
- Your national ID-card

## Non-EEA nationals

Your visa might mention to visit the townhall within eight days after your arrival in Belgium. In practice you will most likely not be able to get an appointment within this time range. You can initiate the process as soon as possible after arrival and only if you've found a place where you can stay for the whole academic year. Do not start the procedure when residing in a B&B, hotel, with friends for a couple of days after arrival, ...!

You will have to submit the required documents to the Foreigners' Desk of your townhall. In general, the required documents are the same you have submitted for your visa:

- Valid international passport with Belgian visa in it (your passport has to remain valid for at least 6 months longer after you arrive in Belgium);
- Your rental contract;
- One (or more) passport photo;
- Standard form (=Enrolment certificate);
- Proof of solvency (Annex 32, blocked account statement or scholarship agreement).
- [Medical certificate](#) issued by doctor accredited by the Belgian diplomatic post
- Criminal record extract
- Proof of health insurance

Procedures may differ depending on the townhall you visit.

Keep in mind that the Brussels area is made up of [19 different municipalities](#), and each one has a different townhall – so be sure to check where you need to go. After your visit to the townhall the police will visit you at your residence to verify your address. Please make sure to add your name to the postbox and doorbell. When the town hall administration completes the registration process, you will receive your Belgian residence card.

## C. HEALTHCARE AND INSURANCES

### HEALTH INSURANCE

In Belgium, individual basic health insurance cover is mandatory for all long term visitors (+90 days). **EEA students** are most likely covered in Belgium by the state health insurance system in their home country for the duration of the studies, on the condition that they bring their [European Health Insurance Card \(EHIC\)](#). If you need treatment during your stay, you will pay the bills in Belgium and claim refunds with your insurance provider in your home country.

**Non-EEA** students must get their own health insurance upon arrival in Belgium. The International Relations Office [assists](#) students in registering with the Belgian state health insurance system. One of Belgium's health insurance providers, **Partenamut**, is present at the International Relations office on certain days.

Students with a blocked account are obliged to register for the additional **SIP (=student insurance programme) insurance**. This insurance comes on top of the mandatory basic health insurance (E.g. Partena, CM, Solidaris, ...) This basic health insurance will reimburse you partially for your medical costs, SIP will reimburse you the remaining part and also covers repatriation when necessary. [Online info on SIP insurance](#).

Students who remain in Belgium for 6 months or less will have to register for SIP integral. The price is ca. €39/month. Students who stay longer than 6 months will have to register for SIP complementary (on top of their basic health insurance). The price is ca. €24/month.

**! General information about health insurance in Brussels is available [here](#).**

**! Insurance plans of some non-EEA countries may be sufficient to cover the medical expenses in Belgium, based on bilateral agreement. More information can be found [here](#).**

### REPATRIATION INSURANCE

The mutuality will cover the cost of medical expenses in Belgium (for ca. 60-70%) but will not cover repatriation costs in the event of illness or accident. You may therefore wish to take out private repatriation insurance in your home country or take a complementary insurance called **SIP**.

The SIP is mandatory for the owners of the **blocked account**.

**! Please note that SIP complementary insurance is only useful when taken on top of the basic health insurance.**

### OTHER (OPTIONAL) INSURANCES

- House insurance
- Family and personal liability insurance
- Car insurance

More info on other optional insurance can be found [here](#).

## D. STUDENT JOBS

Many students rely on student work to earn some extra income to live comfortably, pay for rent and other basic needs.

### GENERIC INFO FOR JOB STUDENTS

The [Student@work website](#) provides information about working as a student. Who is a working student? How many hours can you work as a student? What does it mean for your child benefits or taxes to work as a student? This site gives you the answers or helps you to find them.

#### *Checking your quota*

As a student you can work 600 hours per year at reduced social contributions. These 600 hours make up your quota. Legislation might change related to the number of working hours at reduced social contributions. Make sure to check the student@work website for updates.

From this website, you have quick access to the Student@work application which allows you to check how many hours you can still work at reduced social contributions.

#### *Who is behind this?*

This website and the Student@work application are an initiative of the National Social Security Office (NSSO).

### VUB JOBS FOR STUDENTS

VUB, along with the university hospital, is one of the biggest employers in the Brussels region. You can find our student job offer here:

- [Student jobs at the VUB](#)

### JOBS FOR STUDENTS ELSEWHERE

We have made a selection of general job boards offering vacancies for student jobs.

- [Student.be](#)
- General website of [VDAB](#) (Dutch only - filter on 'studentenjob')
- [Actiris Brussels](#) (Dutch only - select "studentenjob" in Type werkaanbiedingen)
- [Studentjob](#) (Dutch only)

# WORKING STUDENT?

## 4 THINGS TO REMEMBER

### 1. SOCIAL SECURITY CONTRIBUTIONS

#### MAXIMUM 600 hours per year

for which you and your employer pay less social security contributions. You can choose your hours freely, throughout the whole year.

You can combine the 600 quota with the 190 hours of association work, as long as you respect the legal limitations.

Verify the number of hours remaining on studentatwork.be or on our app!

#### WHAT IF YOU WORK MORE THAN 600 HOURS?

From the 601<sup>st</sup> hour on, you will be subject to higher social contributions.



### 2. CHILD BENEFITS

If you are younger than 18, you are always entitled to child benefits, no matter how much you work. Once having reached that age, the number of hours you may work depends upon your **place of residence**.

In Wallonia, you are authorised to work during your studies for 600 hours under a student contract without losing your family allowance entitlement. If you exceed these 600 hours, you are eligible for an **additional quota of 240 hours** per term, during which you can still work without any impact on your family allowance payment. Only the days actually worked are taken into consideration (and not paid public holidays, for example). Hours worked during a compulsory or non-compulsory work placement as part of your degree are not taken into account in this quota.

In the **German-speaking Community** you may work without restriction with a student contract while studying.

In **Flanders**, you are not authorised to work more than 600 hours a year.

In the **Brussels-Capital Region**, you are authorised to work a maximum of 240 hours per term. This provision does not apply in July, August and September, as long as you recommence your studies after the summer holidays. In Brussels, all working hours are taken into account, including those worked under an "ordinary employment contract".

For more information, contact your regional family allowance fund via the websites below:

**Wallonia**  
www.aviq.be

**German-speaking Community**  
www.osbelgienfamilie.be

**Flanders**  
www.groepakket.be

**Brussels**  
www.irisicare.brussels

### 3. YOUR OWN TAXES

#### MAXIMUM €14,514.29\* per year

Always file your tax return!

#### WHAT IF YOU EARN MORE THAN THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT?

You are allowed to earn more than €14,514.29\* a year, but then you will have to pay taxes yourself.

\* Gross amount after deduction of social security contributions, valid for the tax year 2023.

### 4. YOUR PARENTS' TAXES

If your gross annual earnings exceed the following amounts, you are no longer tax-dependent of your parents:

- 7.965 €\* if your parents are taxed jointly;**
- 10.090 €\* if your parents are taxed separately;**
- 11.952,50 €\* if your parents are taxed separately and you are disabled**

\* Gross amount, after deduction of social contributions, valid for income year 2023. The amounts only apply if you have no other means of income than wages from student work and if you do not deduct any actual professional expenses.

#### WHAT IF YOU EARN MORE THAN THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT?

If you are no longer tax-dependent, your parents will be paying more taxes.

Do you plan to work your entire 600 hours in 2023? Then keep a close eye on your earnings.

### DO YOU WORK IN THE CARE SECTOR?

Then the hours you perform during the first quarter of 2023 will not count towards your 600 hours. The government has decided this to encourage students to work in the healthcare sector.

#### WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Then check out the information about a job in the care sector on the website [studentatwork.be](http://studentatwork.be).

## WHAT IS STUDENT@WORK?

Studentatwork.be is a website that contains all possible information about working as a student. The site also hosts the Student@work online service.

This application shows you how many hours you may still work while paying lower social security contributions. You can use it to make an attestation for your employer as well.

#### HOW DO YOU LOG IN?

To check your remaining hours or make an attestation, you have to log in. You can do so with itsme or your eID card.

#### USE THE APP

Do you have a smartphone? Download the app for iOS or Android. With it, you can check your remaining hours whenever and wherever you want.

#### ANY QUESTIONS?

Trouble logging in to Student@work? In doubt about the rules?

#### CALL US OR ASK YOUR QUESTION ON FACEBOOK.

studentatwork.be  
02 509 59 59  
facebook.com/studentatwork

 **.be** **STUDENT AT WORK**



if you have a smartphone, it's free!

## E. BANKING

International students with a long stay in Belgium are advised to open a Belgian or IBAN format/SEPA zone bank account. Students are free to choose any bank of their choice to open an account. Newly arrived students are advised to open an online account as this usually does not require having a residence permit (incl. national register number).

### Traditional (Belgian) bank account

Documents that are necessary for opening a Belgian bank account:

- Belgian residence permit, or annex15 containing national register number,
  - Rental contract,
  - Proof of registration at the university,
- ! Documents may differ depending on the bank, nationality and type of account.**

List of most common Belgian banks opening accounts for students (survey 2023):

- KBC
- ING
- BNP Paribas Fortis
- Beobank
- Belfius

### Online banking

Some students prefer online banking to traditional banking. Online banks usually require less administrative information in comparison to traditional banks. The IBAN accounts from the banks below are all part of the SEPA-zone and are accepted for the purpose of e.g. transferring the monthly instalments of the blocked account.

List of online banks that are frequently used by international students (survey 2023):

- Wise
- Revolut
- Bunq
- Monese
- Nickel

## F. TAXES

Every year, every resident - temporary or permanent – receives their **tax declaration form**. International students with a long stay are required to fill in a tax return form each year.

An online instruction [video on how to fill in a simple tax return](#) (for single students with no taxable income).

**Make sure not to throw these forms away, you will need to declare your income, even if you did not work!**

## G. TRANSPORTATION

From the city centre to the outskirts of Brussels, public transport has you covered. An efficient network of trams, metros, and buses ensures that you can get anywhere in a short period of time and with ease.

The main organisation of public transport in Brussels is the **STIB/MIVB**.



### UNDER THE AGE OF 24

As a student, under the age of/or 24, you can apply for a [STIB/MIVB school pass](#):

**This pass is:**

- valid for the entire STIB-MIVB network (tram, bus, metro)
- Costs ca. €12 per academic year
- Available until max 24 years old

**OR**

**Opt for a BRUPASS school pass:**

- valid for the entire STIB-MIVB network and **De Lijn, TEC** and **SNCB** (train networks) within Brussels
- Costs ca. €52 per academic year



The price of a single STIB/MIVB or SNCB ticket in Brussels is €2.10 - €2.50, so we strongly recommend students to purchase a seasonal/yearly pass.

### STUDENTS OVER THE AGE OF 24

You can apply for a reduction of your public transport subscription by obtaining the BIM status. Ask your Belgian health insurance provider (f.e. Partena, CM, Solidaris, ...) for more info.

**Student Multi (for SNCB, train network only)**

- 10-ride card with which you travel a **fixed route 2 or 3 times a week** within a period of 49 calendar days. Ideal if you live in student housing.
- **The price depends on your trajectory.** For 10 rides between Gent and Brussels, you pay for example ca. € 13.10.
- Available until **max 25 years old**

### BRUPASS 10 journeys

- Fare: ca. € 16,80
- No age limit
- Valid on the entire **STIB-MIVB** network, except from Brussels Airport with line 12, the **TEC and De Lijn** bus networks within the Brussels-Capital Region and the **SNCB-NMBS** railway network, 2nd class, within the Brussels-Capital Region.

### STIB-MIVB 75 JOURNEYS

- Fare: €105,00
- Valid on the whole STIB-MIVB network (except departing from Brussels Airport)
- Valid for 18 months after purchase and valid for 90 days from the first validation
- No age limit

**! Public transport runs from roughly 5 am to midnight. During the weekend, night buses run every 30 minutes from midnight to 3 am on special routes.**

**! An overview of transport lines for STIB/MIVB can be found [here](#)**

**! An overview of the railway network of SNCB is available [here](#)**

## FLOYA

[Floya – Your mobility in BXL mode](#) is an app that provides you an overview of all the transportation options nearby to optimize your routes.

## CYCLING

An alternative to public transport is cycling. Brussels is a very bike-friendly city that is equipped with many bike lanes. The city offers bikes that can be rented at several locations: (<https://www.villo.be/en/>)

## E-SCOOTERS and E-BIKES

In Brussels, lots of electric scooters and bikes are available for people to share. They're an easy and cheap way to get around the city, costing about €5 for half an hour. You can find electric bikes and scooters from companies like Lime, Dott, Poppy, Tier, Voi, Bird, Bolt, and Pony.

## NIGHT TAXI COLLECTO

From 11:00 PM to 6:00 AM, you can book a shared night taxi called Collecto, operating seven days a week. The fare for a trip is ca. €6, and the taxi can pick you up at one of the 220 designated points. To book Collecto, download their [app](#) and ensure you request a ride at least 30 minutes before your planned departure. Payment can be made in cash or through the app.



## H. RENEWAL OF RESIDENCE PERMIT

The extension of your residence permit is the discretionary power of decision of the Immigration department. By law, applications for extension of residence permits should be submitted to the town hall after making an appointment and **at latest 14 days before the current residence permit expires**.

The below documents are required:

- Valid passport,
- Your current residence permit,
- "[Standard form 1](#)" proof of registration in a higher educational institute -> issued by the Student Administration department
- "[Standard form 2](#)" certificate of study progress -> check Student Self Service after deliberation period
- Proof of sufficient financial means (annex 32, blocked account, or grant agreement),
- Proof of the Health Insurance.

**! This is a non-exhaustive list of documents. Please check with your local town hall which additional documents they may require.**

## 3. LEAVING BELGIUM

If you intend to leave Belgium, you will need to take certain practical and administrative steps, such as closing your bank account and informing the municipal authorities of your departure.

### DE-REGISTRATION AT THE TOWNHALL

The de-registration process applies to non-Belgian nationals with a valid Belgian residence card who intend to leave the country permanently. This process effectively de-registers you from the population registry thereby invalidating your residence card.

You should return your residence permit to the townhall prior to departure to receive a '**Model 8 form**' confirming that you have de-registered. The customs may ask to provide this document when you leave Belgium. If you do not return your residence permit to the town hall prior to departure, you need to write to the townhall (enclosing a copy of your residence permit) and ask to be deregistered. Make sure that you inform the townhall of your new address and your permanent address in your home country.

### HEALTH INSURANCE

Do not forget to terminate your health insurance affiliation. They need the "model 8 form" (see De-Registration townhall above) to terminate your affiliation. If you have any additional health insurance plans and coverages, please contact the provider to find out the conditions for termination.

### HOUSING ARRANGEMENTS

Make sure that you give notice of your intention to leave your residence well in time. In Belgium this notice must generally be given by registered letter minimum 3 months before the expected departure date or to the end of the rental contract. It is essential to inform the landlord of your intention to leave the apartment even if you have a 1-year rental contract. If you do not, your contract may be automatically renewed for another year. Please read your contract carefully.

### BANK ACCOUNT

Before departure you might want to close your bank account. Note that closing a bank account does not just mean bringing your balance to zero. You will have to visit the bank and sign for the closure of your account. Please check all transfers and payments and settle all invoices before closing your account.

# II. LIFE IN BELGIUM

## 1. WELCOME TO BELGIUM

### BRIEF HISTORY

Belgium is a European country with a constitutional monarchy that became independent in 1830. Divided into three regions - Brussels, Flanders, and Wallonia - Belgium has a unique cultural mix. Flanders predominantly speaks Dutch, Wallonia French, while Brussels, the bilingual capital, officially recognises both languages. Additionally, a small German-speaking community resides in East Wallonia. With 10 provinces and a population of ca. 11.5 million, Belgium celebrates its national holiday on July 21st, marked by a military parade and various events in the city centre of Brussels.

### CULTURE

Belgium boasts notable figures in various fields, including musicians such as Jacques Brel and Stromae, athletes like Kevin De Bruyne, Remco Evenepoel, and Nafi Thiam, and artists like René Magritte, and George Rémi. Belgian cuisine is renowned, featuring moules-frites (mussels and chips) as its national dish, along with world-famous chocolate, waffles and beer.

Belgium also has several cultural attractions, from the futuristic Atomium in Brussels to the charming canals of Bruges. Medieval wonders like Ghent's Gravensteen Castle and architectural gems like the Cathedral of St. Michael and St. Gudula in Brussels offer diverse experiences. Nature lovers can explore forests in the Ardennes, while foodies indulge in Belgian cuisine. With a rich tapestry of heritage and culture, Belgium's attractions promise an unforgettable journey.

### BRUSSELS

Brussels is a vibrant capital known for its diversity, hosting the headquarters of the European Union and NATO. While French and Dutch are the main languages, the city is home to people from many different backgrounds. With a lively atmosphere, Brussels offers a wide range of cultural activities, including concerts, theatres, cinemas, exhibitions, museums, and monuments. The city is also surrounded by parks and forests, providing plenty of green spaces to enjoy. Getting around is easy, thanks to well-designed public transport and road networks. Plus, Brussels offers fast and reliable connections to other major cities like Paris, London, Amsterdam, and Frankfurt through high-speed rail networks and good infrastructure.

With more than 86,000 students – that is almost a quarter of all the students in our country – Brussels is the largest student city in Belgium. Brussels is also a world city, where you can blend into the crowd. In brief: you get all the benefits of a university city, plus those of a bustling metropolis.

## 2. LIFE IN BRUSSELS

We know that a new city and country might be overwhelming at first. We would like to help you find your way around Brussels and underneath we collected some information that may help you get a better grasp of what life in Brussels is like.

### SHOPPING

The opening hours of Belgian shops differ from one shop to another. In general, supermarkets are open from Monday to Saturday from 08:30 until 20:00. Clothing shops are generally open from Monday to Saturday from 09:30 until 18:00 or 19:00. The same working hours are usually applicable to pharmacies and other services.

The main supermarket chains in Belgium are Carrefour, Colruyt, Delhaize, Lidl and Aldi, of which Colruyt, Aldi and Lidl are the cheapest. Some supermarkets, like Delhaize and Carrefour, have smaller sized shops called City Delhaize, Delhaize Shop & Go, Proxy Delhaize and Carrefour Express, which are often open on Sundays.

### DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT

Many healthcare professionals in Brussels speak English so don't worry in case you need medical assistance. There is a general medical practice affiliated with VUB near campus, all general practitioners there speak English. You can find more info and their contact details [here](#).

You can also opt to visit a different medical practice. The [doctoranytime](#) website offers a filter based on the languages you speak, location and other details you deem important when looking for a healthcare professional.

When choosing a doctor, we also encourage you to check if they are considered as “**registered**” (in **French, 'conventioné'**) or not, as it will influence the price you will pay for the appointment. Registered doctors have a set price on their services and with the health insurance that price should be affordable. A lot of General Practitioners (GPs) and dentists are registered, but only a few specialized doctors (dermatologists, ophthalmologists, orthopedists, etc.) are registered. If you need the help of a specialized doctor, we advise to call them first to inform on the price of their services. If you are not sure how reimbursement affiliated with your health insurance works, please reach out to your health insurance provider.

**Be mindful that having a health insurance saves you up to 60-100% of costs associated with your healthcare. Furthermore it is compulsory to have a valid health insurance for staying in Belgium.**

**Non-urgent doctor appointments require an upfront booking. If you are having an emergency, please visit the nearest accident & emergency department of your local hospital.**

## RELIGION

Belgium is a laic state which means it has no state religion. The constitution (1830) prescribes a strict separation between state and religion but also guarantees the freedom of worship. Belgium has six recognised religions: Roman-Catholic, Islam, Protestant, Orthodox, Judaism and Anglican. This doesn't imply other religions are not allowed but that only these six are entitled to government subsidies.

## ACTIVITIES DAY/NIGHT IN BRUSSELS

Whether you want to admire Brussels' historic monuments, discover its museums or sample local flavours, there's always something to see or do in the capital of Europe! In our city you can find everything you may need and to better orient yourself in there, we advise you to check out [visit.brussels](https://www.visit.brussels), as it provides an overview of events happening in the city!

To truly get to know our capital, you need to dive into the night! The offer is vast, and ranges from exotic, trendy and alternative to chic, gastronomic, musical, and more.

## FOOD

Like many other regions in the world, Brussels has its culinary specialties, starting with its famous waffles. But how many of them do you know? Chocolate, speculoos, Belgian waffles are the famous sweet treats you may find in the local chocolate shops and small pastry shops, and they will not disappoint! Savoury dishes like Belgian chips, vol-au-vent, Flemish stew, mussels and chips (and many more) can also be easily found in the city. Make sure to try as much traditional dishes as possible!

Make sure to check the opening hours of the places you visit, as some of them might be open in the morning, close in the afternoon and then open again for the evening. Some of them might only be open in the evening.

## Rubbish

Throughout the university and across Brussels, **recycling is vital**. The following rubbish bags are used across Brussels, colour-coded:

- **Blue** bags = plastics, drinking cartons and cans
- **White** bags = general waste
- **Green** bags = garden waste
- **Yellow** bags = paper and cardboard
- **Orange** bags = food waste (composting)
- Collection point: glass, clothes, oil,...



## 3. WELCOME TO VUB

VUB is a modern university. Though we celebrated 50 years as an independent university in 2019, our roots lay in the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), with which we have been associated for over 185 years since its foundation in 1834. This rich history produces a wealth of experiences, a network of connections and a first-rate education. On and around our campuses, we still find traces of this history every day. We are proud of our past and value our heritage. We are committed to managing the latter with dignity and making it accessible to the public.

Freedom, equality and solidarity: these are the humanistic values of our university. We implement them with a thoroughgoing critical attitude and an open, creative mind. The result: a university where you form your own opinion without a marching order from above.

### CAMPUSES

As a Brussels university, most of its [campuses](#) are in and around Brussels: The VUB Main Campus in Etterbeek, the VUB Health Campus in Jette, Campus COOVI in Anderlecht, and the VUB Photonics Campus in Gooik. In addition, there are extra classrooms in the heart of Brussels and a campus in Leuven and Diest. Depending on your field of study, you will be going to one of these campuses.



## A. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OFFICE

Our International Relations team provides guidance, support and advice to International students and visitors at VUB. Our colleagues work on a variety of European and international projects. They advise incoming and outgoing students and staff, attract new students from abroad.

As an incentive towards the international community a Partena representative helps out our international visitors with their health insurance. They are available in our office twice a week. Contact [vub@healthinsurance.be](mailto:vub@healthinsurance.be) for more details.

For generic questions you can contact the office by email via: [international.relations@vub.be](mailto:international.relations@vub.be)



**Please contact the addresses below for specific questions related to:**

- Blocked account status, contact [blocked.account@vub.be](mailto:blocked.account@vub.be)
- Exchange (student/staff), contact [exchange.incoming@vub.be](mailto:exchange.incoming@vub.be) / [exchange.outgoing@vub.be](mailto:exchange.outgoing@vub.be)
- Refugee status questions, contact [refugee@vub.be](mailto:refugee@vub.be)
- International student recruitment, contact [prospective.students@vub.be](mailto:prospective.students@vub.be)
- EU projects, contact [erasmusprojects@vub.be](mailto:erasmusprojects@vub.be)
- Tuition fees, enrolment, admissions, etc, contact [studentadministration@vub.be](mailto:studentadministration@vub.be)
- Course registration, timetables, (online) classes, etc, contact [guidance@vub.be](mailto:guidance@vub.be)
- China Scholarship Council students, contact [csc@vub.be](mailto:csc@vub.be)
- Development cooperation projects, contact [development.cooperation@vub.be](mailto:development.cooperation@vub.be)
- Arabic language classes for children (up to 15 years), contact [arabic.class@vub.be](mailto:arabic.class@vub.be)
- Mastermind scholarship students, contact [mastermind@vub.be](mailto:mastermind@vub.be)
- Brussels Diplomatic academy, contact [bda@vub.be](mailto:bda@vub.be)

## B. GOING ABROAD

We know that you have just arrived here, but it might interest you to go abroad for your studies/traineeship? The VUB has close links with many international higher education institutions and companies. Make the most of it! Go abroad for a few months to study or do an internship and return as a student of the world.



### DESTINATIONS

VUB offers a variety of destinations where students can apply for an exchange. While the exact countries are determined by the interfaculty agreements, we guarantee that you will have a plenty of choice between both EEA and non-EEA countries. To know exactly to which countries you can go exchange, [consult our website](#).

### FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE EXCHANGE

There are a few ways to help you fund your studies or internship abroad: Erasmus Belgica, Erasmus+, Generic Scholarship, Priority Country Programme, Washington Center, ASEM Work Placement & VLIR-UOS travel grants. To know more about each of them, you can consult our website or reach out to [exchange.outgoing@vub.be](mailto:exchange.outgoing@vub.be)

### EXCHANGE TEAM



To reach out to your exchange team, please drop an email to [exchange.outgoing@vub.be](mailto:exchange.outgoing@vub.be) or visit International Relations office during the [working hours](#).

## C. FACULTY CONTACT INFORMATION

### Faculty Secretariat Law and Criminology

E-mail: [facrc@vub.be](mailto:facrc@vub.be)

Tel: [+32 2 629 15 77](tel:+3226291577)

VUB Main Campus Etterbeek  
Pleinlaan 2  
1050 Elsene  
Building B, 4th floor, room B4.05

### Faculty Secretariat Medicine and Pharmacy

E-mail: [secretariaat.gf@vub.be](mailto:secretariaat.gf@vub.be)

Tel: [+32 2 477 41 02](tel:+3224774102)

VUB Health Campus Jette  
Laarbeeklaan 103  
1090 Jette

### Faculty Secretariat Psychology and Educational Sciences

E-mail: [facpe@vub.be](mailto:facpe@vub.be)

Tel: [+32 2 629 25 36](tel:+3226292536)

VUB Main Campus Etterbeek  
Pleinlaan 2  
1050 Elsene  
Building C, 3rd floor, room C.3.05

### Faculty Secretariat Engineering

E-mail:

[secretariaat.ingenieurswetenschappen@vub.be](mailto:secretariaat.ingenieurswetenschappen@vub.be)

Tel: [+32 2 629 27 58](tel:+3226292758) // [+32 2 629 15 72](tel:+3226291572)

VUB Main Campus Etterbeek  
Pleinlaan 2  
1050 Elsene  
Building K, 2nd floor

### Faculty Secretariat Sciences and Bioengineering Sciences

E-mail: [facwe@vub.be](mailto:facwe@vub.be)

Tel: [+32 2 629 12 95](tel:+3226291295)

VUB Main Campus Etterbeek  
Pleinlaan 2  
1050 Elsene  
Building F, 4th floor, room 4.F.107

### Faculty Secretariat Physical Education and Physiotherapy

E-mail: [faclk@vub.be](mailto:faclk@vub.be)

Tel: [+32 2 629 27 28](tel:+3226292728)

VUB Main Campus Etterbeek  
Pleinlaan 2  
1050 Elsene  
Building L, room L2.08

### Faculty Secretariat Social Sciences & Solvay Business School

E-mail: [faces@vub.be](mailto:faces@vub.be)

Tel: [+32 2 614 83 83](tel:+3226148383)

VUB Main Campus Etterbeek  
Pleinlaan 5  
1050 Elsene  
3rd floor, room 3.07a

### Faculty Secretariat Languages and Humanities

E-mail: [faclw@vub.be](mailto:faclw@vub.be)

Tel: [+32 2 629 39 05](tel:+3226293905)

VUB Main Campus Etterbeek  
Pleinlaan 2  
1050 Elsene  
Building C, 5th floor, room 5.C.402

[Online overview](#)

## D. EMERGENCY CONTACTS AND SAFETY

At VUB the safety of our campuses and the VUB community takes centre stage. We therefore have a number of emergency services and safety procedures for prevention, incidents and emergencies, and general requests for help.

### CAMPUS SECURITY

The security guards are responsible for security on campus 24/7. For every incident, they are the first point of contact. If necessary, they immediately contact the emergency services. They can intervene both on the spot (e.g. in a case of aggression, violence, theft, nuisance, unauthorised persons), and after the facts (e.g. burglary, vandalism). They are in the best position to guide emergency services on campus. You can find them on VUB Main Campus in Building X4, entrance 6.

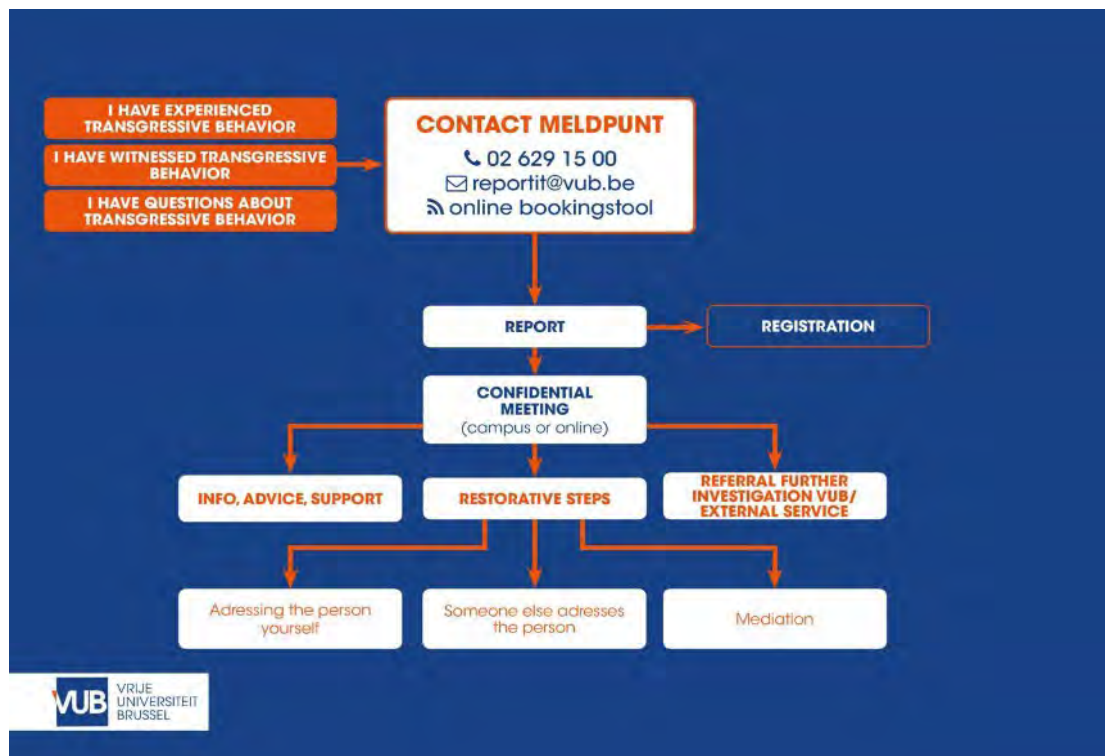
You can call reach them by call **+32 2 629 21 76** or by e-mail **bewaking@vub.be**

### REPORTING CENTRE FOR TRANSGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

There is no place at VUB for inappropriate or transgressive behaviour. Have you experienced some form of inappropriate behaviour? Then rest assured we are there to help you. You Are Not Alone.

You can report unwanted transgressive behaviour discreetly at the reporting centre. Whether you are dealing with verbal or physical violence, bullying, unwanted sexual acts, intimidation, racism or discrimination, a VUB staff member bound by professional confidentiality and authorised as an independent counsellor will support and inform you about possible further steps.

A report may be a first step towards a solution. You can then decide for yourself whether or not to proceed.



## EMERGENCY SERVICES

If you experience or witness a medical emergency, an accident, or an assault, or if you have found a suspicious object, please contact the campus' security by **+32 2 629 21 76** (*VUB Main Campus*).

Below you can find the general emergency numbers available in Belgium, in case you will encounter an emergency off campus:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>112:</b> the number to dial in case of emergency, accessible everywhere in Europe | <b>02 477 32 40:</b> Burn Care Centre (children)                        |
| <b>100:</b> in case of fire, suspect smoke, gas leak or any other danger.            | <b>02 506 47 47:</b> Civil protection                                   |
| <b>101:</b> Federal police   | <b>04 250 43 31:</b> for SOS Nurses – Brussels                          |
| <b>105:</b> Belgian Red Cross  | <b>02 513 02 02:</b> for SOS Doctors                                    |
| <b>110:</b> Child Focus  | <b>0900 10 500:</b> for pharmacies on duty                              |
| <b>070 245 245:</b> Poison control centre  | <b>107:</b> for Remote Help Line (listening day and night in anonymity) |
| <b>02 268 62 00:</b> Burn Care Centre (adults)                                       | <b>0800 32 123:</b> Suicide prevention                                  |

## Community Help Service

[CHS](#) operates a 24/7 Helpline in English, for children, adolescents and adults. Calls are anonymous and confidential. The Helpline is staffed by a team of volunteers that is recruited, trained, supervised and supported by the mental health professionals working with CHS.

CHS also operates a Mental Health Services Centre in Brussels, housing an international team of professional therapists who provide support for a comprehensive range of mental health issues. All our therapists speak English and many also work in other languages.

## Brussels University Consultation Center

BRUCC is a centre for psychological counseling, training/education and research. Children and adults can contact us for individual counseling, systemic therapy (couples and families), group training and psychological assessment. BRUCC is located on the VUB main campus. More info on their activities via the [BRUCC website](#).

## In need of legal help?

The [Brussels expat helpdesk](#) can help you with topics related to your stay in Brussels.

[The Integration agency](#) offers assistance for students with questions on immigration law. You can find their contact details via their dedicated website (only in Dutch).

[Brussels Law School Consultancy](#) is an initiative to provide legal guidance to students, young entrepreneurs and those seeking justice. Our organisation consists of passionate law students who want to be your guide in the legal maze.

## E. EXAM AND CLASS SCHEDULES

VUB makes sure to publish exam and class schedules well in advance. We also publish an [academic calendar](#) for the upcoming year almost 9 months in advance. Please note that the class and exam timetables **may be changed**, so it is important to check schedules regularly.

### CLASS SCHEDULES

[These](#) are the **public class schedules**, available for anyone to consult. **Personal schedules** (click on *Student*) can only be generated for registered VUB students.

Last-minute changes are always possible so make sure to check your schedule regularly!

1. Click '**Public Timetable Pages**' and then 'Timetable per Study Programme and course'
2. You can look up schedules by searching for a **specific study programme, student group or course**
3. Once you've selected your search criteria, click 'Show schedule'

### EXAM SCHEDULES

We try to publish exam schedules well in advance. Here we try to give you an idea on when you can expect to know the exact dates of the exam. 1<sup>st</sup> semester exam session takes place from early January to early February. 2<sup>nd</sup> semester exams take place from early June to early July. The 2<sup>nd</sup> exam session (retakes) happen in August-September. **For the 1st exam session** (January + June), you can expect the exam schedules at least 4 weeks before the start of the exam period and for the **2nd exam session = retakes** (August + September) at least 2 weeks before the start of the exam period.

## ACADEMIC CALENDAR

The academic calendar offers an overview of the most important data and periods of the academic year, such as starting and end date, semesters, holidays, examination periods, educational activities and public holidays. You can consult the ongoing (or upcoming) academic calendar on VUB website, just look up *Academic Calendar VUB*.



## F. FINANCIAL AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

### FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Here is the [overview](#) of the financial support available for students **who meet the academic and nationality requirements**.

#### Caroline Pauwels Relief Fund

The VUB Caroline Pauwels Relief Fund for International students provides limited and temporary support to national and international students for whom the existing financial support is insufficient or inaccessible.

This Relief Fund depends on fundraising by the VUB Foundation and is therefore supplemented according to incoming donations. The fund helps students who find themselves in a temporary financial emergency (hospitalised, no place to sleep, ...) Students need to show that they are facing unexpected costs, therefore tuition fees are not part of the support provided by this fund. Students still have to fit in certain criteria. To know more details, please look up Financial Help on our website or contact [social.financial.support@vub.be](mailto:social.financial.support@vub.be) for more information.

### SCHOLARSHIPS

There are several scholarship programmes available, but please be aware the application deadline is often quite early and the requirements are usually very specific. You can find an overview of the available scholarship programmes on our [website](#).

### OTHER FORMS OF SUPPORT

As a student, you can buy a computer at a discount. Through [Campus Shop](#), you can purchase new or refurbished devices. As a student, you are automatically entitled to the free 'fast student service' for a period of two years. If something is wrong with your laptop, it will be picked up the next working day and repaired within 5 working days. If it can't be fixed in 5 days, you'll get a loan laptop for free.

## G. USEFUL CONTACTS

To get information on any facilities or inquiries relating to VUB, contact one of the following departments:

### Education and Student Administration

E-mail: [studentenadministratie@vub.be](mailto:studentenadministratie@vub.be)

VUB Main Campus Etterbeek  
Pleinlaan 2  
1050 Elsene

### Study Guidance

E-mail: [begeleiding@vub.be](mailto:begeleiding@vub.be)

Tel: [+32 2 629 23 06](tel:+3226292306)  
VUB Main Campus Etterbeek  
Pleinlaan 2  
1050 Elsene  
Building F

### Social, Legal, and Financial Support

E-mail: [studentenstatuut.studiefinanciering@vub.be](mailto:studentenstatuut.studiefinanciering@vub.be)

Tel: [+32 26 29 23 15](tel:+3226292315)  
VUB Main Campus Etterbeek  
Pleinlaan 2  
1050 Elsene  
Building X1

### Student Housing

E-mail: [huisvesting.housing@vub.be](mailto:huisvesting.housing@vub.be)

VUB Main Campus Etterbeek  
Pleinlaan 2  
1050 Elsene  
Building X1

### Student Information Hub

E-mail: [info@vub.be](mailto:info@vub.be)

Tel: [+32 2 629 20 10](tel:+3226292010)  
VUB Main Campus Etterbeek  
Pleinlaan 2  
1050 Elsene  
Building D

### International Relations Office

E-mail: [international.relations@vub.be](mailto:international.relations@vub.be)

Tel: [+32 2 614 81 01](tel:+3226148101)  
International Relations Office  
Pleinlaan 5  
1050 Elsene

### VUB Foundation

E-mail: [foundation@vub.be](mailto:foundation@vub.be)

Tel: [+32 2 614 88 30](tel:+3226148830)

VUB Foundation  
Pleinlaan 11  
1050 Elsene

### People & Organisation (HR Department of VUB)

E-mail: [mens\\_en\\_organisatie@vub.be](mailto:mens_en_organisatie@vub.be)

VUB Main Campus Etterbeek  
Pleinlaan 2  
1050 Elsene

## 4. CAMPUS LIFE (ETTERBEEK MAIN CAMPUS)

It is often said that your student days are the best days of your life. Whether that's true, you can find out for yourself. But if you decide to study at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, you can rest assured that everything is in place to give you a few unforgettable student years: from great VUB events and cheerful student associations to the bustling Brussels nightlife that awaits around the corner. What more do you want?

### A. CULTURE

Looking to soak up some culture on campus? Explore *Pilar*, the cultural hotspot on the VUB Main Campus. Your appetite for performing arts, music, and exhibitions is sure to be satisfied at this cultural centre and artistic laboratory. Here, the university community works to create a cross-fertilization of art, science, and entrepreneurship, together and for one another. *Pilar*, the House for Arts & Sciences, with its multifunctional black box and exhibition space, is located in building Y on the VUB Main Campus.

On the campuses, you will also find the VUB choir and orchestra, a fully-fledged sculpture park, and buildings that are true architectural gems.



### B. STUDENT ORGANISATIONS

Always wanted to join a [student organisation](#)? At VUB you don't have to look very far. Thanks to the large number of student organisations, you are guaranteed to find like-minded souls and win on three counts: you experience an unforgettable time, make friends for life and grow as a person.

For international students at VUB, there are special organisations addressing their needs and experiences as well as providing opportunities for self-development:

- [ESN VUB EhB Brussels](#)
- [Society of Weird and Mad People - SWAMP](#)
- [International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience - IAESTE](#)
- [Spectrum GSA VUB](#)
- [VUB Gaming](#)
- [African Students' Community - ASCOM](#)



## C. SPORTS

Healthy mind, healthy body, and healthy social life – that’s what we aim for at VUB! VUB Sport wants to stimulate everyone (particularly students) to achieve and maintain a good quality of life through regular, lifelong, and responsible exercise and/or sports. This way VUB Sport contributes to a healthy society. We believe that there is a sport for everyone, and VUB Sport will help you find it!

The campus has a big sports complex, it offers more than 10,000m<sup>2</sup> of indoor and outdoor space for its sports facilities and infrastructure. It has a 25-meter-long swimming pool, a football and rugby pitch, and a Basic-Fit, which is located within the VUB Main Campus.

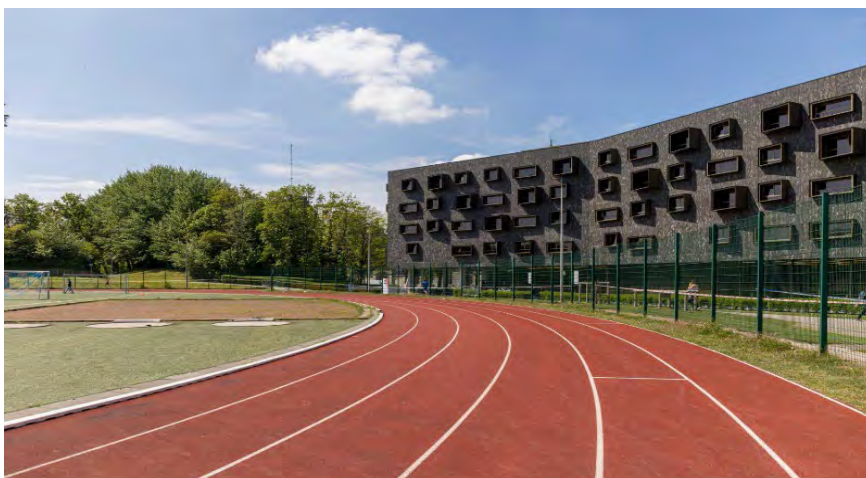
VUB Sport organises many activities and works closely with other sports providers in the region to provide members with as much choice as possible.

### BASIC-FIT

VUB students enjoy a discount of up to 50% when purchasing a full-option annual membership at Basic-Fit (Comfort+ formula, which costs ca. €120 annually). Simply buy your membership card in the clubs on one of the two VUB campuses. Once you have your membership card, you can use it in Basic Fit gyms across Europe. They are open 24/7 on both of our big campuses!

### SPORTMIX

Sportmix is a package of different sports activities which take place every week in and around the VUB sports complex on the VUB Main Campus. During the academic lecture weeks we offer more than 30 sports sessions for over 20 sports\* a week. During the 2019-2020 academic year, for example, students could practice the following sports: aikido, athletics, badminton, basketball, bodymix (aerobics), boxing, fitness gymnastics, European sword fighting, karate, kendo, kickboxing, floorball (indoor hockey), underwater hockey, pilates, rugby, strong HIIT, table tennis, urban dance, football, waterpolo, swimming and zumba. We also offer a number of sports activities during study and exam weeks so that you can keep up your good habits.



## D. FOOD

Food to nourish your soul? There's plenty of that at VUB. Or maybe you just need a no-frills meal? We've got plenty of those on offer too! Every day at our restaurants you can choose between a daily menu, a vegetarian meal, pasta or a stir-fry. Feel like a sandwich? Then head for our canteen or one of the many snack bars and cafés on and around our campuses. There's something for everyone!

### VUB RESTAURANT

Every weekday you can choose from different menus for your lunch in the VUB restaurant at our Main Campus. Besides meat and fish menus, we offer a vegetarian and vegan dish every day. In the canteen you will find sandwiches and snacks. Hot meals are served during lunch, with plenty of options available every day.

### VUB CANTEEN

Don't feel like a hot meal? Fancy a sandwich, pastry, coffee or soft drink? Then drop by the canteen during daytime for a quick bite. We are open until late afternoon!

### OPINIO

In the heart of the campus, on the esplanade between building D and E, you will find Opinio, a café serving a vast assortment of drinks and snacks. In the summer you will find many people on the terrace enjoying a cool drink or a delicious coffee.

### 'T COMPLEX

Need to take a break after exercising or keen to meet up with friends? Above the entrance hall of building L, the VUB Sports Complex, you will find 't Complex. The place to be for a bite to eat from noon onwards. The menu features snacks, more hearty dishes and daily suggestions. The view of the swimming pool is a nice little extra.

### BAR PILAR

In the brand-new culture tower Pilar, you will find not only a concert hall and an exhibition space, but also Bar Pilar, a cozy campus pub with a terrace where you can enjoy a drink or a bite to eat. "A place for musical discovery, a melting pot where everybody is welcome".

## E. LEARNING A NEW LANGUAGE

One of Belgium's unique features is its multilingual environment. It has three national languages: Dutch, French, and German. VUB offers courses in Dutch and English, so naturally, those are the languages you should learn. French is also a useful language to know, because it is the most spoken language in Brussels, despite Brussels Capital Region being situated in Flanders. Most jobs in Belgium will favour applicants who speak English and one of the three national languages (usually Dutch or French).

### ACTO AND CVO SEMPER

There are [many ways](#) to learn a new language. VUB offers language courses for students of all levels at the Academic Centre for Language Education (ACTO), which is located on the Jette and Etterbeek campuses. ACTO offers a full range, from tailored workshops to individual language support.

Alternatively, using an app such as Duolingo is also a great way to start learning. We understand that learning a new language can be challenging and intimidating, but thanks to Brussels' multilingual environment, you'll get plenty of opportunities to practice!

CVO Semper is another organisation that teaches a wide range of languages. They have flexible class times and teach over 15 000 students.

### LANGUAGE TABLES

VUB Main Campus also has Language Tables. During the academic year, Language Tables are organised on certain weekdays in the student restaurant in Etterbeek. This is the perfect time to practise your languages with native speakers and to get to know students who speak other languages. Speakers of different languages meet on different days. As you can see, you will have no problem learning a new language!

Facebook link: <https://www.facebook.com/VUBLanguageTables/>

### Brussels Integration Agency (BON)

[The brussels Integration Agency for newcomers \(BON\)](#) helps newcomers to feel at home in Brussels, including students. They give language introductions, provide individual coaching, help recognise foreign diploma's and provide integration courses. BON established a close connection to VUB resulting in several joint activities taking place throughout the academic year.

## F. STUDY FACILITIES

Studying on campus can be fun, as we are offering a range of services for those students who prefer to study with friends and take advantage of our various study spaces, VUB library and Study Guidance centre.

### STUDY GUIDANCE

Maximising your chances at success and making sure you are comfortable in your own skin, that's the main goal of Study Guidance. You can come to them in any phase of your study path, for information, advice, guidance and training. Besides the academic guidance, you can also find a quiet and modern study space in their office.

### UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

The University Library offers a wide range of online databases, electronic periodicals and eBooks, and of course a big collection of newspapers, books and periodicals, in both paper and electronic format. The reading rooms of the libraries are also freely accessible and provide a wide range of printed literature, Wi-Fi (access with a VUB account), a range of copying, printing and scanning facilities and a big study space.

### CAVA

CAVA is the result of a partnership between the VUB University Archives and the Centre for Secular Humanist Heritage. CAVA collects, stores, showcases and provides access to the archives and scientific heritage of VUB and the archives of the secular humanist community in Flanders and Brussels.

You can consult the equivalent of more than 3km of documents, publications, photographs, oral sources and artefacts. CAVA also organises lectures, exhibitions and guided tours for organisations, schools or individual visitors. Moreover, it acts as a mediator in preserving and promoting intangible heritage, such as stories, songs, rituals and traditions. The university boasts a wealth of such intangible heritage. Two examples are student rituals and the song festival.



## G. VUBUDDY

Are you new at VUB? Still finding your way and interested in meeting other students? Then a VUBuddy is something for you! A VUBuddy is an experienced VUB student who is studying the same as you and who helps you with the transition to university. Your VUBuddy will help you find your way around the campus so you can quickly find your place!

### What can I expect from my buddy?

- Your VUBuddy offers a listening ear where necessary,
- Will be your first point of contact for (study-related) questions,
- Will refer you to the right services,
- Will share personal experiences and will bring you into contact with fellow students by organizing meetings or by participating in organised VUBuddy activities.

### What's in it for me?

- You quickly learn your way around the new academic world,
- Will get to know fellow students in your field of study,
- Will receive interesting study tips & facts from an experienced expert,
- Will be kept informed of interesting events and unmissable VUB info,
- Have a first point of contact where you can go with your questions and can participate in nice activities and feel connected to your university.

**! To apply for a VUBuddy, please go to Infopunt for more details.**



## OUR SOCIALS

You can find VUB on:

- **FACEBOOK:**
  - **VUB general (in Dutch & English)** <https://www.facebook.com/VUBrussel/>
  - **VUB International Relations (English):**  
<https://www.facebook.com/VUBInternationalRelations/>
- **TWITTER:**  
[https://twitter.com/VUBrussel?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor](https://twitter.com/VUBrussel?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor)
- **YOUTUBE:** <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxr4eNyQVz-7Qcf3K7lxp3g>
- **INSTAGRAM:** <https://www.instagram.com/vubrussel/>
- **TIKTOK:** <https://www.tiktok.com/@vubrussel>

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