Guide for Incoming exchange students (LLP-Erasmus or bilateral agreements).
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Welcome to the ULB!

Thank you for choosing the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) as part of your academic journey. We are delighted to welcome you here and will make every effort to make your stay as enjoyable and productive as possible.

Located at the heart of Europe, the ULB has always been very involved in student mobility. Its campuses are among the most international in Europe, with over 30% of students coming from abroad (16% Europeans). The international reputation and excellence of our University are underlined by the fact that nearly 20% of the ULB’s scientific and academic staff and one out of every two PhD candidates are foreign nationals.

We believe that a stay abroad is now one of the key components of a quality university education. From this perspective, we encourage our students to take advantage of mobility opportunities and do our best to make sure foreign students get the best possible welcome when they come to the ULB.

This dynamic policy reaching out to students from all over the world is one of the ULB’s main characteristics. With this in mind, we have compiled this guide to help you better understand the University and the city you are going to be staying in, and to allow you to take advantage of their many services.

I wish you a pleasant stay.

Serge Jaumain

Vice-Rector for International Relations
Belgium

Before the 1830 revolution, Belgium was part of the “United Kingdom of the Netherlands”. In 1830 it seceded from the Northern provinces and declared its independence, gaining recognition as an independent state in the 1831 Treaty of London. A royal house was introduced and the country became a constitutional monarchy. The current king is Albert II, the sixth king of the Belgians.

The name Belgium comes from the name of the Roman province “Gallia Belgica”. This province was located in the territories of what are now the Netherlands, Belgium, northeastern France, western Germany and Luxembourg. It was inhabited by the "Belgae", a mix of Celtic and Germanic peoples.

Since 1994, Belgium has been a Federal State consisting of three regions: Brussels, the bilingual capital where French and Dutch are joint official languages; Flanders, the Dutch-speaking North; and Wallonia, the French-speaking South.

Belgium has common borders with France, the Netherlands, Germany and Luxembourg. It is divided into three geographical regions: 67 kilometres of coastline and coastal plains along the North Sea, the hilly region of central Belgium and the Ardennes hills and forests in the southeast.

Belgians well known abroad include the writers Maurice Maeterlinck (Nobel Prize for Literature in 1911), Emile Verhaeren, Georges Simenon (Maigret) and Hugo Claus; the artists/cartoonists Georges Remi (Herge, the Father of Tintin), Franquin (Gaston Lagaffe), Peyo (The Smurfs), Morris (Lucky Luke); the film directors Chantal Akerman, Jaco Van Dormael, Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne; the architects Victor Horta and Henry van de Velde; the singer/songwriter Jacques Brel and the cyclist Eddy Merckx. Painters such as James Ensor, Paul Delvaux and René Magritte were the worthy successors of Rubens and other Flemish masters.

Belgium’s well-known specialties include its mouth-watering chocolates, a long brewing tradition with a wide range of local beers, many of which are unique, and of course mussels served with French fries.
Brussels, the capital of Europe

The founding of Brussels seems to go back to around 1000 AD. A river port was founded on the banks of the Senne, near to where the Stock Exchange now is. Its first written mention dates back to around 1015-1020 (Brucsella > broek = marsh + sali = home).

In 1047, the Counts of Leuven, future dukes of Brabant and lords of Brussels, founded the St. Gudula chapter in the Saint Michael church. This church was to be restored and enlarged from the thirteenth century onwards, becoming what is now the St Michael and Gudula Cathedral.

In the 15th century, Brussels becomes the true capital of the Spanish Netherlands, with Emperor Charles V basing the main institutions in charge of administering our regions in the city. In 1713, the city came under Austrian rule.

There then followed occupations by the French and the Dutch, with Belgium finally gaining its independence in 1830, and Brussels becoming the capital of the Kingdom of Belgium.

A massive building programme reinforced its status as capital: the building the GaleriesRoyales Saint-Hubert (1846), the covering over of the Senne (1867-1871), the construction of the Palace of Justice (1866-1883) and the Parc du Cinquantenaire (1880). Led on by Victor Horta, superb Art Nouveau houses were erected at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. In 1958 the city became the site of the World Exhibition (Expo 58), leading to more major building work in the city. The Atomium, built for the occasion, remains a key symbol of Brussels.

Brussels is well known as the headquarters of a number of European institutions. In 1958 it was chosen as the headquarters of what was then the EEC (European Economic Community), now the European Union. It is also home to numerous other international institutions such as NATO and around 1,400 international NGOs.

Situated at the heart of Europe, open to the world, with nearly one third of its inhabitants foreigners or of foreign origin, the Region of Brussels enshrines a long tradition of cosmopolitanism.
For more information on Brussels, its districts, its museums, etc., please use the following link:

The Brussels-Capital Region and its 19 municipalities, in alphabetical order with their postal codes

1. Anderlecht (1070)
2. Auderghem (1160)
3. Berchem-Sainte-Agathe (1082)
4. Bruxelles-ville (1000, 1020, 1120, 1130, 1040, 1050)
5. Etterbeek (1040)
6. Evere (1140)
7. Forest (1190)
8. Ganshoren (1083)
9. Ixelles (1050)
10. Jette (1090)
11. Koekelberg (1081)
12. Molenbeek-Saint-Jean (1080)
13. Saint-Gilles (1060)
14. Saint-Josse-ten-Noode (1210)
15. Schaerbeek (1030)
16. Uccle (1180)
17. Watermael-Boitsfort (1170)
18. Woluwe-Saint-Lambert (1200)
19. Woluwe-Saint-Pierre (1150)
At its inauguration in 1834, the ULB had just 96 students. Today there are over 24,000, 30% of whom are foreigners. The number of faculties and schools has likewise increased rapidly, in response to the emergence of new disciplines and increasing specialisation. With its 10 faculties, its schools and institutes, it has become a full all-round university covering all disciplines and all academic levels.

Pierre-Théodore Verhaegen, the Brussels lawyer, whose efforts led to the Université Libre de Bruxelles being established.

The former Palais Granvelle, on the corner of the Rue des Sols and the Rue de l’Impératrice in the centre of Brussels, was the University’s main building between 1842 and 1928.

With its multicultural background, the ULB is a key player in the dynamic world of international research and development and mobility programmes, playing, for example, a leading role in the creation of the "UNICA" network linking up 42 universities in European capitals.

It meets up to its social, societal and scientific responsibilities with great commitment, combining broad-based teaching with very high level research.

It intentionally plays a key role in the economic development of the regions in which it is based (Brussels and Wallonia). The ULB also has a teaching hospital, the Erasmus Hospital, a cancer institute, the Bordet Institute, and an extensive hospital network.

Open to the world, the ULB is involved in numerous international R&D programmes and high level research projects.
The quality of ULB research is underlined by four Nobel Prizes (Jules Bordet, Medicine Nobel Laureate in 1919, Albert Claude, Medicine Nobel Laureate in 1974, Ilya Prigogine, Chemistry Nobel Laureate in 1977, and François Englert, Physic Nobel Laureate in 2013), a Fields Medal awarded to Pierre Deligne, three Wolf Prizes (including Robert Brout and Francois Englert in 2004), two Marie Curie Prizes (Marco Dorigo and Nicolas Cerf) and 22 Francqui Prizes (the prestigious Belgian awards, the last one being awarded to Pierre Gaspard in 2006). With its international reputation, the ULB has earned a prominent place within the global academic community.

Founded on the principle of free-thinking (*libre examen*), a principle based on independent judgment and the rejection of all dogma, the ULB has remained true to its original ideals: to be an institution free from all supervision, committed to the defence of democratic and humanistic values (including its way of governance).

Today it is one of the most important French-speaking universities.
ULB missions

The ULB is committed to preparing its students for responsible citizenship, passing from teaching to use of acquired knowledge and encouraging life-long learning in a continually changing world.

With its roots in Brussels and Wallonia, the ULB is at the service of society, building fertile and innovative partnerships with players from the whole world of politics, culture and business, with a special focus on the health sector.

Located at the heart of the European Union, the ULB is open to the world. It is involved in the realisation of a multicultural Europe, contributing to spreading its humanist and democratic values.

The ULB attaches particular importance to the development of its students and those contributing, day in, day out, to the success of its missions. To this end, it is permanently striving to optimise the way it operates to meet up to future demands.

Permanently encouraging discussion, offering a forum for debate and opinions, a home for creativity and the dissemination of knowledge, the ULB bases its teaching and research on absolute freedom of thought. This principle of *libre examen*, which involves a critical stance vis-à-vis any form of power, is in itself one facet of human emancipation.

It has been a longstanding wish of the ULB to adopt an environmental policy. The whole university community has now agreed on ways to make the university a place actively promoting environmentally friendly actions.

From a sustainable development perspective, the University is targeting the continual reduction of all negative impacts its activities have on the environment, taking into account the social, cultural and economic aspects of all processes involved.
Les Facultés
(http://www.ulb.ac.be/sitemap/ulb/map-enseignement.html#menuEnseignementFacs1)

Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres :
Campus du Solbosch, bâtiment A, niveau 2
Tel +32 2 650 24 94

Faculté de Droit et de Criminologie :
Campus du Solbosch, bâtiment H, niveau 1
Tel +32 2 650 39 36

Faculté des Sciences Sociales et Politiques :
Avenue Paul Héger, 6 - Bâtiment H - Niveau 3
Tel +32 2 650 45 76

Faculté Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management :
Avenue F. D. Roosevelt, 21 - Bâtiment R42
Tel +32 2 650 48 66

Faculté des Sciences Psychologiques et de l'Education :
Bâtiment D - niveau 9
Tel +32 2 650 32 68

Faculté des Sciences - Ecole Interfacultaire de Bioingénieurs :
Campus de la Plaine, bâtiment BC, niveau 3
Tel +32 2 650 29 46

Faculté de Médecine :
Campus Erasme, Route de Lennik 808, Local J1.11a
Tel +32 2 555 61 11

Ecole de Santé Publique :
Campus Erasme, Route de Lennik 808, bâtiment A, niveau 2
Tel +32 2 555 40 13

Faculté des Sciences de la Motricité :
Campus Erasme, Route de Lennik 808, bâtiment N
Tel +32 2 555 33 39

Faculté de Pharmacie :
Campus de la Plaine, bâtiment BC, niveau 3
Tel +32 2 650 53 37

Ecole Polytechnique de Bruxelles - Ecole Interfacultaire de Bioingénieurs :
Campus du Solbosch, bâtiment U, porte B, niveau 4, local UB4-159A
Tel +32 2 650 40 85

Institut d'Etudes Européennes :
Avenue F.D. Roosevelt 39
Tel +32 2 650 30 77

Faculté d'Architecture :
- Département "Horta" Campus de la Plaine - Bâtiment S
  Tel +32 2 650 50 52
- Département "la Cambre" Site Flagey : Place Flagey, 19 1050 Bruxelles
  Tél : +32 2 640 96 96
THINGS YOU MIGHT WANT TO KNOW BEFORE COMING TO THE ULB

PRACTICAL INFORMATION
Our University offers a wide range of curricula. Information on the organisation, regulations, faculties, institutes and course programmes is available on our website: http://www.ulb.ac.be/

The ULB is also intended to be a place of creativity, discussion and relaxation. Thus you will find here an extensive range of cultural and sports activities. For more information, please refer to: http://web2.ulb.ac.be/actulb/index.php

The ULB is a non-discriminatory host, welcoming students with all kinds of disabilities. The ULB operates a contact point for such students, providing them with help and guidance in various ways: mediating with teachers, finding ways of adjusting, offering support during courses and exams, etc. For more information, see: http://www.ulb.ac.be/services/etudiants/etudiants-handicap.html

If you are interested in taking part in an exchange programme to the ULB, we recommend that you carefully study our web pages, where you will find, with the help of this guide, answers to most of the questions you might have. If you have any other questions, just contact us.

**Our system of teaching:**

Our system of teaching is based on the so-called "Bologna" process. In 1999, European states signed the Bologna Declaration, agreeing to establish a unified higher education system. This process involves the establishment of comparable degree courses, thereby increasing inter-compatibility and enabling student mobility. For this purpose, the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) was established, allowing a better understanding and readability of degree courses.

We offer first-cycle general studies leading to a Bachelor degree and normally lasting three years (180 ECTS, or 60 ECTS / year). These can be followed by a second cycle leading to a Master degree. This cycle takes one or two years depending on the desired depth and provides access to a professional career.

Upon successful completion of an initial Master course counting for at least 300 ECTS and having led to an MA degree in two years, further specialisation may be followed, leading to a specialist Supplementary Master’s qualification (*master complémentaire (MC)*). Finally, we offer third-cycle studies, open to holders of a two-year MA and leading to a doctorate (PhD).

**The grading system:**

Following exams (oral and / or written) the final assessment will be expressed as a score between 0 and 20, with a score of at least 10/20 denoting a pass grade. To make the results interpretable, they are then transcribed into an ECTS grading scale, using a cohort percentile (i.e. how a student has performed relative to other students in the same class (or a significant group of students), as set out in the following scale:

A: the top 10% of passing students;
B: the following 25%;
C: the following 30%;
D: the following 25%;
E: the remaining 10%.

The F grade is used for students who have failed.

At the end of an exchange stay at the ULB, exam results are sent by the host faculty directly to the exchange student’s home university.
The academic calendar:
The academic year is divided into four terms, the first two being scheduled for courses and exams. The academic year begins in mid-September. The first term ends on January; the second term runs from February to June.

The updated academic calendar is available on:

Course catalogue:
The ULB publishes its course catalogue a few weeks before the start of each academic year. It lists the courses offered, together with information about the faculties, courses, when they are held (1st, 2nd term or 1st and 2nd terms for the annual courses) and who is holding them.

The catalogue is available on:
http://www.ulb.ac.be/programme

Registration as an exchange student:
A stay as an exchange student at the ULB can only take place on the basis of Inter-University Agreements between the ULB and the partner universities. For more information, please consult your University's International Relations service and/or Erasmus service. Individual applications (from “free-movers”) are not accepted - your application must go through your university.

To be considered, your application must include, inter alia, the proposed study programme or "Learning agreement”.

After receiving your application via your University's International Service and reviewing it, we will inform you directly of our decision, with a copy being sent to your University.

Before purchasing your airline ticket, please wait for the acceptance letter that you will be sent by the ULB. This should arrive in sufficient time for you to complete all arrangements that a stay a long way from home requires.

The address of the registration department together with the name of administrative officer responsible for you will be indicated to you in the acceptance letter that will be sent to your personal address in adequate time.
**Academic Coordinators:**
The name and contact data of your ULB Academic Coordinator will be included in your acceptance letter. Your Academic Coordinator is responsible for monitoring your stay with us from an academic point of view. He (she) will validate the curriculum that you will be following at the ULB as an exchange student and answer any questions you may have on it.

**Course registration:**
Most of our faculties do not require prior registration for participation in courses. Students present themselves at courses after informing themselves about when and where they take place. This information is posted either on each faculty's website under "valves électroniques" or on the faculty bulletin boards ("valves papier") situated near the faculty secretariats.

**Language skills:**
Most courses are offered only in French. As an exchange student you will therefore need a working knowledge of this language. Summer courses in French (fee-based) are offered by our language centre, with (free) courses available at the start of each term for students with a basic knowledge of French.

To this end, a language test is foreseen. Information on it will be given directly to students who have been accepted as exchange students.

More information on language courses is available on:  

**Arrival at the ULB:**
On arrival at the university, you will be given a personal welcome on our premises. You will receive your student card and the official certificates establishing your status as a ULB student. No registration fee will be requested but you must have paid the registration fees for the academic year of your exchange at your home University. Please be aware that we may request proof of such registration at any time.

Certain Faculties also offer a special welcome to exchange students. You will be informed of such either directly by the Faculty itself themselves, or when you visit the Students Mobility Office.
Our Campuses:

Our University has several campuses. Dependent on your field of study, you will be either in Brussels, on the Solbosch, La Plaine or Erasmus campus, or outside Brussels on the Gosselies campus. (cf: http://www.ulb.ac.be/campus/index.html)

Solbosch

La Plaine
Residence Permit / Visa:
Dependent on your country of origin, you will be asked to present on your arrival a student visa or temporary residence permit. We therefore advise you to contact as soon as possible the Belgian Consulate nearest to your home to get information on the steps necessary for staying in our country as an exchange student.

More information is available on: http://www.diplomatie.be

Upon your arrival, and provided that you plan to stay for more than three months, you will need to go to the citizen registration office at the municipal authority (administration communale) of your place of residence in Belgium to register as a foreigner and thereby to obtain a residence permit for the duration of your studies.

Student grants:
As stated in students’ mobility agreements, our University offers no grants to the exchange students it accepts. You will be dependent on your own resources or those offered by your home University for funding your stay at the ULB.

Cost of Living:
To live in Brussels on a modest budget, you should reckon with some €900 per month, over half will be needed for accommodation.

If you do not have a student grant, you might want to get a student job. You must however be aware that this will not allow you to completely finance your stay, as there are statutory limitations on the number of hours students may work.

If you are an EU citizen, registration with the municipal authority and your ULB student card are all that is needed to take on a student job. Non-EU students need to apply for a work permit.

Climate:
With its temperate maritime climate, it tends to rain a lot in Belgium. You will therefore need rainproof clothing for all seasons.

Average temperatures in winter range from 1.1°C to 6.2°C, in summer from 12.8°C to 21.6°C.

Healthcare:
EU Students with health insurance should bring with them proof of such insurance (the European Health Insurance Card). This will cover them, should they need medical treatment in Belgium.

Non-EU students also need health insurance valid in Belgium. It is strongly recommended that such insurance be taken out before leaving your country of origin (private health insurance). An alternative is to participate in the Belgium’s health insurance scheme once you are here. This will cover you as a student for the duration of your stay.

All students registered at the ULB have ULB accident cover. This covers any accidents that might occur in the pursuit of academic activities.
Accommodation:
Most students live in private lodgings. The cost of sharing a private flat is around €350.

The best way of finding lodgings is to look around when you actually get here.

We advise you to book a room in a hotel (which can be quite expensive) or a Youth Hostel (see http://www.laj.be/), using this as a base for going out to look for rental ("A louer") accommodation near the University campus where you will be located. You can also follow up offers from leaving students posted outside ULB restaurants and lecture theatres.

Transport:
Belgian public transport consists of buses, trams and trains. The price of a single ticket inside Brussels is 2,00-€2,50 but you can get a monthly or yearly season ticket on the basis of the documents certifying your student status that you receive when you arrive.

You can also get 10-trip or 5-trip tickets, which work out cheaper than buying single tickets. We encourage you to find out about these and make use of them. For more information, please visit: http://www.stib.be/abonnements.html?l=fr

An alternative to public transportation is cycling. Brussels, as a signatory of the "Charter of Brussels", is committed to developing the cycling infrastructure and promoting cycling in the city. This means that you will find, outside the ULB’s campuses, self-service bicycle parks where bicycles can be rented at very affordable prices (the 1st half hour is free, 50 cents for the 2nd ...). For more information see: http://www.provelo.org/spip.php?article2156

Banking:
For paying for your lodgings and current expenses, we advise you to open an account at a bank of your choice, once you have arrived in Brussels. To do this, simply go to any bank branch, taking with you your passport or identity card (for EU citizens) and proof of registration at the University. If your passport does not contain your home address, a copy of your registration at the municipal authority in Belgium will be requested.

Telephone and Internet:
In this age of mobile phones, you can either go for purchasing "pre-paid" cards or taking out a subscription. This can be done at a store of your choice. There is a wide range of providers on offer and you will be able to compare prices and offers, once you are settled in Brussels.
Internet access is also very widespread. On the University campus you will find a WiFi network enabling you to connect to Internet in most ULB buildings. To gain access, all you need to do is to activate your ULB Email account. You can do this once you receive your ULB student card.

**On arriving in Belgium:**

If you come to Belgium by plane, you will arrive:
- either at “Brussels Airport” in Zaventem, about half an hour from the centre of Brussels,
- or at the “Charleroi Bruxelles – Sud” airport, about one hour away from Brussels.

To get to the ULB from Zaventem airport, you can either take a taxi (which will be quite expensive) or take the train from the airport to the “Gare Centrale” (Central Station) in the city centre.

You can also take the “Airport Bus” (€4) taking you from Zaventem airport to a number of Metro stations, such as “Schuman”. If going to the Solbosch campus, we advise you to get off at the “Gare Centrale” Metro station and continue your journey by bus.

If you arrive at Charleroi airport, we recommend you take the shuttle-bus connecting the airport with Brussels. There is an hourly service, dropping you off at the “Gare du Midi”. The trip takes one hour, with one-way tickets costing €13. Tickets are sold inside the terminal at counter no. 1.

If you arrive in Brussels by train, you will arrive at one of Brussels’ main stations. From there we recommend you use public transport to take you to whichever campus you will be located at.

Whatever the means of transportation you use to get to the centre of Brussels, the following table describes how to get from there to either the Solbosch or Erasmus campus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How to get from</th>
<th>to the Solbosch Campus</th>
<th>To the Erasmus Campus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gare Centrale (Central Station)</td>
<td>♦ Take the No. 71 bus heading towards “Delta” and get off at the “ULB-Solbosch” stop</td>
<td>♦ Take the “Ligne 5” Metro heading towards “Erasme” and get off at the end station.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gare du Nord</td>
<td>♦ Take the No. 25 tram heading towards “Boondael” and get off at the “ULB-Solbosch” stop</td>
<td>♦ Take the No. 3 tram heading toward “Churchill”, getting off at the “De Brouckère” stop. Then take the “Ligne 5” Metro heading towards “Erasme” and get off at the end station.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gare du Midi</td>
<td>♦ Take the No. 81 tram heading towards “Montgomery”, getting off at “Montgomery”. Then take the No. 25 tram heading towards “Boondael” and get off at the “ULB-Solbosch” stop</td>
<td>♦ Take the “Ligne 6” Metro heading towards Roi Baudoin, getting off at “Gare de l’Ouest”. Then take the “Ligne 5” Metro heading towards “Erasme” and get off at the end station.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Organisation "Express":

*Express* is a non-profit organisation created by students for students. Since its creation in 1991, *Express* has been doing everything possible to ensure that students on international exchange programmes (Erasmus or other) enjoy an unforgettable stay in Brussels.

This organisation brings you together ULB students who have themselves had the experience of taking part in an exchange with one of our partner universities. *Express* has become an anchor point for students finding themselves having to come to grips with both a new country and a different education system concurrently.

With its offering of activities and support outside the academic setting, *Express* gives exchange students the opportunity to recharge their batteries, meet up with other students - and find some good advice if necessary.

Amongst other things, *Express* can provide airport reception for students who have so requested in advance. To qualify, you are asked to register with the organisation through its website: [http://www.erasmusbrussels.net/index.php?target=About_us](http://www.erasmusbrussels.net/index.php?target=About_us)
The Student Mobility Office (*SME*):  

The SME is in charge of student mobility. It is part of the ULB’s Education Department.

SME is located on the 5th Floor, Building "S" on the Solbosch campus.

The team for managing incoming students consists of:
- Mr. Luis Gomez ([lgomezga@ulb.ac.be](mailto:lgomezga@ulb.ac.be))
- Ms. Elizabeth Olivares ([Elizabeth.Olivares.Fontt@admin.ulb.ac.be](mailto:Elizabeth.Olivares.Fontt@admin.ulb.ac.be))
The Students Mobility Office (SME)
Université Libre de Bruxelles
Campus du Solbosch
Bâtiment S, 5e étage, bureau 115
Tél : +322 650 67 68 (2516)
Fax : +322 650 42 43
mobilite@ulb.ac.be