International Welcome Desk
Welcome Guide

International Welcome Desk
Université libre de Bruxelles
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1050 Brussels
Belgium
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Check list

Before leaving your country

- Secure funding
- Check whether you need a visa and/or work permit - see Do I need a visa to come to Belgium?
- Check your administrative status at ULB - see Your Status at the University.
- Prepare documents and ID photos. The documents required will depend on your status but will generally include: passport, driving license, diplomas, birth/marriage certificate, medical file, proof of permanent address. If your diplomas and certificates are in any language other than French, Dutch or English, you may need to obtain certified and legalized translations.
- Check your health insurance coverage. If you are a citizen of an EEA country, request the European health insurance card - see Health insurance.
- If you are on regular medication get at least one month’s supply (more if you are on very specific treatment).
- Book temporary accommodation - see Temporary housing

On arrival

- If you are paid by ULB, visit the Human Resources Department in order to sign your contract/fellowship
- Look for permanent accommodation - see Long term housing solutions
- If you are a Visiting Researcher, ask your ULB supervisor to complete the “Visiting Researcher” application form www.ulb.ac.be/international/docs/visitingresearcher20122013_pub_0001.pdf and send it to the International Welcome Desk. This is essential in order for you to be insured on campus and have access to the ULB libraries/online databases.
- Register at the town hall - see Residence permit.
- Register for health insurance.
- Open a bank account – see Banking.
Your administrative status at ULB will depend on your career level, the reason for your visit and the origin of your funding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profile</th>
<th>Your status at ULB</th>
<th>Enrolment procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| PhD student enrolled at ULB  
Not paid by ULB | PhD student | Enroll as PhD student  
| PhD student enrolled at ULB  
Paid by ULB | PhD student + fellow | Enroll as a PhD student  
Contact the ULB [Human Resources](http://www.ulb.ac.be/) Department regarding payment |
| Visiting PhD student enrolled at another University and coming to ULB for part of your PhD | Visiting researcher | Enroll as visiting researcher  
[http://www.ulb.ac.be/international/visitingresearcher.html](http://www.ulb.ac.be/international/visitingresearcher.html) |
| Post-Doctoral researcher  
Fellowship/salary paid by ULB | Fellow/employee | Contact the ULB [Human Resources](http://www.ulb.ac.be/) Department |
| Visiting Professor/Researcher  
Salary/fellowship not paid by ULB | Visiting researcher | Enroll as visiting researcher  
[http://www.ulb.ac.be/international/visitingresearcher.html](http://www.ulb.ac.be/international/visitingresearcher.html) |
| Post-Doctoral researcher  
Fellowship/salary not paid by ULB | Visiting researcher | Enroll as visiting researcher  
[http://www.ulb.ac.be/international/visitingresearcher.html](http://www.ulb.ac.be/international/visitingresearcher.html) |
Visa and entry requirements

Even if you do not need a visa or have a valid visa, you are not guaranteed automatic right of entry to the Schengen zone.
The border police may still request proof of financial resources, hotel reservation, medical insurance and the reasons for your stay.
Make sure you have the relevant documents!

Do I need a visa to come to Belgium?

Whether or not you need a visa will depend on your nationality and on the planned duration of and reasons for your stay.

It is important to distinguish between short stays (> 3 months) and long stays (< 3 months).

Short stay - less than 3 months

Citizen of a country in the European Economic Area (EEA)

Citizens of the European Economic Area (EEA)¹ do not need a visa.

¹ 27 European Union Countries, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway
Citizen of a non-EEA country

Most non-EU/EEA citizens need a visa, but some are exempted from the visa requirement for short visits. The list of visa-exempt countries can be found at:


Long stay – more than 3 months

European Economic Area

Citizens of the European economic area\textsuperscript{2} and Switzerland do not need a visa.

You need to register at the town hall - see Residence permit

Non-EU/EEA countries

You need a visa.

You need to register at the town hall - see Residence permit.

What type of visa do I need?

Short stay - less than 3 months

You need to apply for the short-stay Schengen visa C.

If you plan to perform paid activities during your stay at ULB, please contact the International Welcome Desk as you may need a work permit.

Long stay – more than 3 months

You need to apply for the long-stay Schengen visa D. The type of visa D required will depend on your status at ULB.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profile</th>
<th>Your status at ULB</th>
<th>Type of Visa D</th>
<th>Administrative steps to be completed at ULB before applying for a visa</th>
<th>Documents issued by ULB to be enclosed with your visa application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PhD student enrolled at ULB</td>
<td>PhD student</td>
<td>Student visa</td>
<td>Enroll as PhD student <a href="http://www.ulb.ac.be/enseignements/inscriptions-english/inscription-">http://www.ulb.ac.be/enseignements/inscriptions-english/inscription-</a></td>
<td>PhD acceptance or pre-acceptance letter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{2} 27 European Union Countries, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Visa Type</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
<th>Additional Documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visiting PhD student, enrolled at another university and coming to ULB for part of your PhD</td>
<td>Visiting researcher</td>
<td>Student visa</td>
<td>Enroll as visiting researcher <a href="http://www.ulb.ac.be/international/chercheurvisiteur.html">www.ulb.ac.be/international/chercheurvisiteur.html</a></td>
<td>Certificate of enrolment at ULB Proof that you are enrolled as a PhD student at another university Proof of financial resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Doctoral researcher Fellowship/salary paid by ULB</td>
<td>Fellow</td>
<td>Student visa</td>
<td>Contact ULB Human Resources Department</td>
<td>“Avis d’arrivée” issued by ULB Human Resources Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor/Researcher ULB employment contract Salary paid by ULB</td>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>Researcher visa with hosting agreement</td>
<td>Contact ULB Human Resources Department</td>
<td>“Hosting agreement” issued by ULB Human Resources Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting Professor/Researcher No ULB employment contract Salary/fellowship not paid by ULB</td>
<td>Visiting researcher</td>
<td>Several options (contact the ULB International Welcome Desk)</td>
<td>Enroll as visiting researcher <a href="http://www.ulb.ac.be/international/chercheurvisiteur.html">www.ulb.ac.be/international/chercheurvisiteur.html</a></td>
<td>Enrolment certificate Proof of financial resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Doctoral researcher Fellowship/salary not paid by ULB</td>
<td>Visiting researcher</td>
<td>Student visa</td>
<td>Enroll as visiting researcher <a href="http://www.ulb.ac.be/international/chercheurvisiteur.html">www.ulb.ac.be/international/chercheurvisiteur.html</a></td>
<td>Enrolment certificate Proof of financial resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Financial resources**

In order to receive a visa, you will need to prove that you have sufficient financial resources to cover your expenses during your stay in Belgium.

The amount will depend on the type of visa you are applying for, starting at 604 euros per month for a student visa. Please note that while this amount suffices for you to receive a student visa, it will not suffice to cover all your living expenses in Belgium.

Always enclose proof of income (eg. fellowship, grant etc.) with your visa application.
Short stay tourists and long stay students may be “sponsored” for their visa by a relative, or another person in Belgium, who certifies that they will cover your expenses during your stay. In French is this called a “prise en charge”:


**Applying for a visa**

You need to apply for your visa at the Belgian embassy or consulate in, or responsible for, your home country or the country in which you are legally residing:


**Documents to be submitted**

Visa application forms and the list of documents to be submitted may be found at


https://dofi.ibz.be/sites/dvzoe/EN/Pages/home.aspx

**Timeframe**

Once you have submitted your visa application, it can take between 2 weeks and 2 months for your visa to be approved. The visa application can be submitted up to 3 months before your expected travel date. *We strongly advise you submit your application as early as possible, especially if you are applying for a long-stay visa and/or bringing your family.*

**References - Legislation**

Precise visa legislation can be found on the website of the Foreigners’ Department (“Office des Etrangers”) at the Home Affairs Ministry:

**Work permit**

**Do I need a work permit?**

**EU citizens (except Bulgaria and Romania)**

No work permit is required.

**Non-EU citizens (& Bulgaria and Romania until 31/12/2013)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profile</th>
<th>Your status at ULB</th>
<th>Financial resources</th>
<th>Work permit requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PhD student enrolled at ULB</td>
<td>PhD student</td>
<td>Personal funds or family support</td>
<td>No work permit required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fellowship ³</td>
<td></td>
<td>No work permit required</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Work permit required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Contact the ULB <a href="#">Human Resources</a> department for more information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You would like to work in addition to studying for your PhD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>You may work without a work permit during university holidays (1 July to 30 September)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Apply for a work permit “C” if you want to work up to 20h per week during the academic year. The job should be compatible with your PhD.⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting PhD – you are enrolled at another University and are coming to ULB for part of your PhD (without enrolling at ULB)</td>
<td>Visiting researcher</td>
<td></td>
<td>Contact the <a href="#">International Welcome Desk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

³ If you are not sure whether you will be receiving a fellowship or a salary please check with your supervisor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Payment Status</th>
<th>Work Permit Required</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-Doctoral researcher fellow</td>
<td>Paid by ULB Fellowship</td>
<td>No work permit required</td>
<td>Attestation “avis d’arrivée” issued by the ULB Human Resources Department. Contact them for more information before submitting your visa application.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting researcher</td>
<td>Visiting researcher</td>
<td>Will depend on type of funding and on your personal situation. Contact the International Welcome Desk for more information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor/Researcher</td>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>Work permit or “hosting agreement” issued by ULB. Contact the ULB Human Resources department.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting Professor/Researcher</td>
<td>Visiting researcher</td>
<td>Will depend on source of funding and on your personal situation. Contact the International Welcome Desk for more information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Do I need a residence permit/identity card?

**Short stay - less than 3 months**

If you are staying in a hotel, you do not need to register at the town hall as the hotel will handle this for you.

**EU citizens**

If you are not staying in a hotel, you should report to the town hall (with your valid passport or ID card) within 10 days of arrival in Belgium and request a “déclaration de présence”, valid for the duration of your stay (maximum of 3 months). In practice, this formality is rarely complied with by EU citizens and non-compliance is rarely sanctioned.

**Non-EU citizens**

If you are not staying in a hotel, you must report to the town hall within 3 days of arrival in Belgium and request a “declaration d’arrivée” valid for the duration of your stay (maximum 3 months).

**Long stay - more than 3 months**

If your stay in Belgium will exceed 3 months, you need to apply for a residence permit.

The residence permit is mandatory, even for EU citizens, and you must carry this with you at all times.

The permit replaces the entry visa and enables you to travel around the Schengen zone or re-enter it (for example, if you go home for the holidays).

**For how long is the permit valid?**

PhD Student: Your residence permit will be valid until 31 October of the year following the year during which it is issued, and has to be renewed annually.

Other cases: The validity of your residence permit will depend on your status and the duration of your funding. In general, it will have to be renewed annually.
**How do I get a residence permit?**

Within 8 days of arrival in Belgium, you need to register at the Foreigners’ Desk at your local town hall (“maison communale” in French). The registration procedure varies from one town hall to another. At some, you need to queue in person early in the morning, at others you need to call in advance to make an appointment.

Please ensure that you put your name on your letterbox and/or doorbell. Within a few days of your first visit to the town hall, a police officer will come round to check that you are indeed living at the address you have given.

A few days after the police officer’s visit, you will receive an appointment to complete the registration process at the town hall and a list of documents to be provided.

It is essential that you attend this appointment (and arrive on time) and take with you all the documents requested. You will also need to pay a fee (15€ - 45€ depending on the commune).

**Which documents will I need to provide?**

The documents generally requested are:

- Valid identity card or passport (with visa, if applicable)
- Five passport photos
- Proof of accommodation (eg. signed rental contract).
- In some cases, birth certificate and/or marriage certificate (plus certified and legalized translations, if applicable).
- Proof of enrolment at ULB (eg. PhD student, postdoc, visiting researcher) or copy of work contract
- Proof of health insurance.
- Proof of financial resources.

If you come with your family, the following additional documents will be requested:

- Valid identity card or passport (with visa, if applicable) for all family members
- Four passport photos per family member
- Birth certificates for all family members and marriage certificate (plus certified translations, if applicable).
- Medical certificate for spouse/partner.
- Proof of health insurance for all family members.
This list is not exhaustive and may vary according to your country of origin.

Please note that in some cases, copies of birth and marriage certificates must be authenticated by the Belgian consulate in your country of origin. In addition, certificates in any language other than French or Dutch must be accompanied by a certified translation.

Please contact the nearest Belgian consulate to check authentication and translation requirements before leaving your country. It will be substantially more expensive to get the documents translated in Belgium than in your country of origin. Should you not have the required authentications and certified translations, the town hall registration process will be considerably delayed.

At your first visit to the town hall, you should request an “Annexe 15” document (proof that you have initiated the registration process), as in many cases the bank will require this when opening your account.

How do I initiate registration at the town hall?

Anderlecht

Place du Conseil 1, 1070 Brussels
Foreigners’ desk: 02 558 09 45
Go in person to the town hall (desk 3).
Opening hours: Monday-Friday 8.30-14.00, plus Thursday 17.00-19.00.
www.anderlecht.be/administration

Auderghem

Rue E. Idiers 12, 1160 Brussels
Foreigners’ desk: 02 676 48 94
Make an appointment by phone.
Opening hours: Monday-Friday 8.30-12.45, plus Thursday 16.00-18.45.

Berchem-Sainte-Agathe

Avenue du Roi Albert 33, 1082 Brussels
Foreigners’ desk: 02/464.04.13
Go in person to the town hall.
Opening hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 9.00-14.00; Thursday: 9.00-14.00 and 16.00-19.00; Friday 8.00-13.00.
www.berchem.irisnet.be/berchem-sainte-agathe
Bruxelles

Boulevard Anspach 6, 1000 Brussels
Foreigners’ desk: 02 279 35 20
Contact the International Welcome Desk for further information.
Go in person to the town hall (desk 17, 2nd floor).
Opening hours: Monday-Friday 8.30-13.00 and 14.00-15.00, plus Thursday 16.30-18.30. You need to arrive well in advance of the opening time and get a ticket.
http://www.brussels.be/artdet.cfm?id=4826&

Etterbeek

Avenue d’Auderghem 113-117, 1040 Brussels
Foreigners’ desk: 02 627 25 02 (or 28 24)
Make an appointment by phone.
Opening hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 8.00-12.30, plus 16.00-18.30 on Tuesday.
http://www.etterbeek.irisnet.be/nos-services/etrangers

Evere

Square Hoedemaekers, 10, 1140 Brussels
Foreigners’ desk: 02 247 62 50
Make an appointment by phone or via the following form:
Opening hours: Monday-Friday 8.00-12.45, plus Tuesday 17.00-19.00.

Forest

Rue de Liège 1, 1190 Brussels
Foreigners’ desk: 02 370 22 59 (or 87 or 86 or 65 or 85)
Go in person to the town hall (desk 11 or 12).
Opening hours: Monday-Thursday 8.30-12.00, Friday 8.30-11.00.
Make sure you go at least half an hour before the opening time.
http://www.forest.irisnet.be/contact-horaires

Ganshoren

Avenue Charles Quint, 140, 1083 Brussels
Foreigners’ desk: 02 464 05 14 (or 25 or 62)
Make an appointment by phone (for a Thursday between 17.00 and 18.45).
Opening hours: Monday-Friday 8.00-11.00 and 13.00-15.00.
www.ganshoren.be/services-communaux
Ixelles

Chaussée d'Ixelles 124, 1050 Brussels
Foreigners’ desk: 02 515 66 27, 02 515 66 03, 21, 22, 23 or 49
Opening hours: Monday-Friday 8.00-13.00, plus Wednesday 14.00-16.00 and Thursday 16.30-18.30.
www.elsene.irisnet.be/site/fr/index.php

Jette

Chaussée de Wemmel, 100, 1090 Brussels
Foreigners’ desk: 02 423 12 57
Go in person to the town hall (desk O).
Opening hours: Monday-Friday 8.00-12.00 and 13.30-17.00.
www.jette.irisnet.be/fr/01_commune/services/administra.htm

Koekelberg

Place H. Vanhuffel 6, 1081 Brussels
Foreigners’ desk: 02 412 14 48
Go in person to the town hall.
Opening hours: Monday-Friday 8.00-12.00 and 13.30-17.00.
www.koekelberg.be/p4w/index.php?cont=1756&lg=1

Molenbeek-St-Jean

Rue du Niveau 7, 1er étage, 1080 Brussels
Foreigners’ desk: 02 412 36 72
Go in person to the town hall.
Opening hours: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 8.30-12.00, Tuesday and Friday 7.45-12.00.
www.molenbeek.be/services-communaux/services-communaux

Saint-Gilles

Place M. van Meenen 39, 1060 Brussels
Foreigners’ desk: 02 536 02 38
EU citizen: make an appointment by phone or via the following form
www.stgilles.irisnet.be/fr/contact/
Non-EU citizen: go in person to the town hall.
Opening hours: Monday-Friday 8.00-12.00, plus Tuesday 15.00-18.00.
It is essential to get there very early (even 2 hours before the opening time). Tickets are handed out between 7.30 and 8.30 and on Tuesday between 15.00 and 16.00.
www.stgilles.irisnet.be/fr/services-administratifs/
Saint-Josse-ten-Noode

Avenue de l’Astronomie 12, 1210 Brussels
Foreigners’ desk: 02 220 26 56
Go in person to the town hall.
Opening hours: Monday-Friday 8.30-1300, plus Tuesday 16.00-18.30.

Schaerbeek

Place Colignon 2, 1030 Brussels
Contact the International Welcome Desk to initiate registration.
Opening hours: Monday-Friday 8.00-13.00.

Uccle

rue Auguste Danse 3 (1st floor), 1180 Brussels
Foreigners’ desk: 02 348 67 00
Go in person to the town hall.
Opening hours: Monday-Friday 8.30-15.00.
www.uccle.be/fr/services-communaux

Watermael-Boitsfort

Place A. Gilson 1, 1170 Brussels
Foreigners’ desk: 02 674 75 86 or 02 674 74 16
Go in person to the town hall (desk 2).
Opening hours: Monday, Tuesday, Friday 8.00-12.00, Wednesday 08.00-12.00 and 14.00-17.00.
www.watermael-boitsfort.be/cote-administratif/services-communaux/service-de-la-population

Woluwe St Lambert

Avenue Paul Hymans 2, 1200 Brussels
Foreigners’ desk: 02 761 27 88
Go in person to the town hall.
Opening hours: Monday-Friday 8.00-12.30, Tuesday 12.30-19.00.
http://www.woluwe1200.be/fr/vie-communale

Woluwe St Pierre

Avenue Charles Thielemans, 93 1150
Foreigners office: 02/773.05.47 or 02/773.05.49
Go in person to the town hall (desk 1).
Opening hours: Monday, Tuesday, Friday 8.30-13.00; Wednesday 14.00-16.00; Thursday 16.00-19.00.
www.woluwe1150.be.

Charleroi

Maison Communale Annexe
Avenue E. Mascaux 100, 6001 Marcinelle
Foreigners’ desk: 071 866 125 (13.00-16.00)
Go in person to the town hall as from 7.30 in order to receive a ticket enabling you to initiate registration.
www.charleroi.be/etat-civil/population/service-etrangers
Accommodation

Temporary housing

Brussels offers a large choice of accommodation in terms of comfort level, price and distance from the University campuses.

Temporary housing options in Brussels include aparthotels, hotels, bed and breakfasts and youth hostels.

Aparthotels

Aparthotels offer furnished and fully equipped studios and apartments, sometimes with a limited cleaning service. Prices range from 70 to 120 € per night, depending on comfort level and location, and generally decrease for longer stays.

Recommended aparthotels close to ULB are:

Axl Flathotel

Rue de la Croix 45, 1050 Brussels
www.axlflathotel.be
Small studio - 75€ per night, 1050 € per month
20 minutes from the ULB Solbosch campus.

Aparthotel Wellington

154 chaussée de Vleurgat, 1000 Brussels
www.wellington.be
Small studio - 85€ per night, 1230 € per month
15 minutes from the ULB Solbosch campus.

Aparthotels Immobe

Immobe have several aparthotels in Brussels; “Louise”, “Souveraine”, “Valée” & “Livourne” are closest to ULB.
www.immobe.be
Small studio – from 61€ per night, 1100 € per month
Less than 20 minutes from the ULB Solbosch campus.

Flatotel

32 Boulevard de la Cambre, 1000 Brussels
Studios and apartments.
Small studio - 75€ per night, 1050 € per month
10 minutes from the ULB Solbosch campus.

Hotels

Brussels has a large number of hotels in a variety of categories. As Brussels is a major congress and meeting venue, availability of rooms will be limited should you arrive during a European Summit or major congress. Whenever possible, try to book well in advance.

Approximate average daily rate for a standard double room:
- 2 stars: 60-80€
- 3 stars: 70-120€
- 4 stars: 140-340€

You can find a hotel close to the ULB via the following websites:
- Brussels Booking Desk - www.brusselsbookingdesk.be
- Booking.com - www.booking.com

Bed and Breakfast

If you prefer a more personal contact with local residents, you may like to opt for a Bed and Breakfast. Bed and Breakfasts in Brussels are generally located in the owner’s home.

The best place to look for a Bed & Breakfast is www.bnb-brussels.be, which lists over 120 addresses in variety of neighbourhoods. On average, prices range from 50 to 80 € per night and some owners offer reduced rates for longer stays.

It is possible to stipulate “close to ULB” as one of your search criteria on the website.
Another useful reference is www.airbnb.com, which offers rooms in private houses and apartments (generally without breakfast).

Youth hostels

If you are on a tight budget, a youth hostel might be a good option for you. The following youth hostels offer single and double rooms, in addition to dormitories. Note, however, that they may be quite noisy, privacy is in no way guaranteed and you are responsible for your own belongings.

2GO4
Boulevard Emile Jacqmain 99, 1000 Brussels
www.2go4.be
34,50 € per person in a twin-bedded room (sheets and morning coffee included)
Central location, Metro Rogier.

AUBERGE DES 3 FONTAINES

Chaussée de Wavre 2057, 1160 Brussels
Single room: 29 € (sheets included, shared bathroom and WC)
This youth hostel is in south-east Brussels and is the closest to the ULB Solbosch and La Plaine campuses. Please note that it may be difficult to reach in the evening as public transport options are limited.

BRUEGEL YOUTH HOSTEL

Rue du Saint-Esprit, 2, 1000 Brussels
Single room: 31€ (breakfast and sheets included)
Central location, Metro Gare Centrale.

GENERATION EUROPE YOUTH HOSTEL

Rue de l’Eléphant 4, 1080 Brussels
www.laj.be
Single room: 33 € (breakfast and sheets included)
West of the city centre, Metro Comte de Flandre.

JACQUES BREL YOUTH HOSTEL

Rue de la sablonnière 30, 1000 Brussels
www.laj.be
Single room: 33 € (breakfast and sheets included, shared WC)
Central location, Metro Madou.

HELLO HOSTEL

Rue de l’Armistice 1, 1081 Brussels
27 € per person in a twin-bedded room (breakfast and sheets included)
Prices may be higher during busy weeks.
+/- 40 minutes from all the ULB campuses, but good public transport connections, Metro Simonis.

**SLEEP WELL YOUTH HOSTEL**

Rue du Damier 23, 1000 Brussels  
www.sleepwell.be  
Single room with shared bathroom: 36 € (breakfast and sheets included)  
Single room with private bathroom: 46 € (breakfast and sheets included)  
Central location, Metro Rogier.

**SLEEP HERE YOUTH HOSTEL**

Rue de la Source 82, 1060 Brussels  
http://www.hostelworld.com/hosteldetails.php/Sleephere/Brussels/13380  
37.50 € per person in a twin-bedded room with shared bathroom (breakfast included)  
Central location, Metro Hotel des Monnaies.

**VINCENT VAN GOGH CENTRE**

Rue Traversière, 8, 1210 Saint-Josse-ten-Noode  
www.chab.be  
Single room: 34 € (breakfast and sheets included)  
+/- 30 min ULB  
Central location, Metro Botanique.

**Couch-surfing**

If you are on a really tight budget, how about couch-surfing? Couch-surfing is an informal hospitality network whereby a local resident puts a bed, couch, mattress at your disposal for a few days at no cost.  
www.couchsurfing.org/  
www.hospitalityclub.org/  
You can only look for accommodation once you have registered on the websites.

**Long-term housing solutions**
If you are planning to spend several months or years at ULB you will need to look for long-term accommodation.

The ULB accommodation office will be able to help you with your search. Their contact details are:
Tel. +32 (0)2 650 21 73 and office.du.logement@ulb.ac.be
http://www.ulb.ac.be/logements/index.html

Rather than making long-term housing arrangements in advance, we recommend that on arrival in Belgium you first go into temporary accommodation and then choose your long-term accommodation after a week or two of intensive house/apartment hunting.

Some important features of the local rental market:
The rental market in Brussels is very fast moving and there are generally many options available at different prices.

In addition to rent, you will need to pay utilities (i.e. gas, electricity, internet, water) and, if you are living in an apartment, “charges” (i.e. shared building costs). Make sure that you identify the “charges” in the rental contract and add them to the rent.

The “charges” will be higher if there is a lift or caretaker. If you rent a student room, “charges” will generally be included in the monthly rent.

The neighbourhoods most favoured by students/researchers at the ULB Solbosch and la Plaine campuses are, in deceasing order of proximity:

1° Ixelles (postcode 1050)
2° Saint Gilles (postcode 1060)
3° Bruxelles-Ville (postcode 1000)
4° Audergem (postcode 1160)

If you want to check how conveniently located an apartment is for the ULB, the public transport website www.stib.be is a useful tool.

Please read your rental contract very carefully before signing. If you have any questions about the terms of the contract or do not understand French, the International Welcome Desk will be able to advise you.

Always try to organize a viewing of the room or apartment before you commit to renting it.

Should you want to reserve long-term accommodation before your arrival in Brussels, please ask a friend or acquaintance to check it out before you sign a rental contract.

Never send money via Western Union, Moneygram or by post. An apartment may look wonderful on the Internet but in reality be non-existent. Be particularly suspicious of any “golden opportunities” – 100m² furnished apartments at 300 €/month simply do not exist!

You are welcome to ask the International Welcome Desk for advice or further information.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Rental Property</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Average Size</th>
<th>Furnished</th>
<th>Average Monthly Rent &amp; “Charges” &amp; Utilities&lt;sup&gt;5&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Hall of Residence or Student Room</td>
<td>A room or small studio, with private or shared bathroom, shared kitchen and lounge. There are a limited number of rooms in student halls of residence, mostly reserved for undergraduates. There are also many privately owned furnished student rooms (known as “kots”)</td>
<td>15-20 m²</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>300-450 &amp; 0 or 100-150 &amp; N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studio</td>
<td>Independent accommodation, with bed/lounge/kitchen in one room, plus private bathroom.</td>
<td>30-50 m²</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>450-600 &amp; 50-150 &amp; N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 bedroom apartment</td>
<td>Apartment with a separate bedroom</td>
<td>50-70 m²</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>600-750 &amp; 50-150 &amp; N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared accommodation</td>
<td>House or apartment shared with other occupants or with the owners. Bathroom, kitchen and other facilities will generally be shared. Some landlords will only rent a room for the whole academic year, others accept shorter periods (seldom less than one month).</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>350 to 550 &amp; N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bedroom Apartment</td>
<td>Apartment with 2 separate bedrooms, kitchen &amp; lounge, bathroom</td>
<td>80-100</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>850-1500 &amp; 100-150 &amp; N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>Generally with 3-4 bedrooms, kitchen, lounge, bathroom, terrace and/or small garden</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Difficult to find &amp; N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>5</sup> Prices indicated are for Ixelles. You may find cheaper options if you live further away from the university.
Useful accommodation websites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Privately owned rooms, studios, apartments and shared apartments in Brussels rented through the University (in French) |
| Office.du.Logement@ulb.ac.be | |
| www.appartager.be | Shared accommodation. |
| www.immoweb.be | Furnished and unfurnished studios, apartments and houses. (Use “Refined search” if you wish to find furnished accommodation.) |
| www.immovlan.be | Furnished and unfurnished studios, apartments and houses. |
| www.brusselsdestination.be | Furnished studios and apartments. Both short and long term rental contracts. |
| www.vivastreet.be | Furnished and unfurnished studios, apartments and houses. |
| www.brukot.be | Furnished student rooms and shared accommodation. |
| [www.etr-brussels.be](http://www.etr-brussels.be) | European Trainee Residence |
| [www.traineesinbrussels.be](http://www.traineesinbrussels.be) | Furnished rooms, studios and shared accommodation for trainees and students in Brussels. Must be booked several months in advance |

**Rental Contracts**

In Belgium, the standard rental contract is a 9-year contract. The tenant may break the rental contract at any moment by giving 3 months’ notice (by registered letter) and by paying compensation equal to 3, 2 or 1 month’s rent if the contract is broken during the 1st, 2nd or 3rd year respectively. No compensation is due after the end of the third year. Rental contracts
for 3 years or less are generally fixed-term contracts which cannot be broken without payment of penalties.

Short-term rental contracts can often be negotiated for furnished accommodation. Before signing the contract, take care to clarify the notice period and compensation due in the event of early termination of the contract. We recommend that, whatever the type of rental contract, you always try to negotiate inclusion of a clause authorizing you to find someone to replace you should you need to break the rental contract earlier than you had initially anticipated, and thereby avoid payment of compensation. Please do not hesitate to contact the International Welcome Desk for advice or further information.

The first month’s rent must be paid on signature of the rental contract. Before you receive the keys, you will need to arrange tenant liability insurance (this can be done via your bank) and set up a rental deposit (generally to the value of 2 months’ rent). We advise putting the rental deposit in a blocked account in your name at your bank, rather than giving it directly to your landlord.

Some landlords require an official entry inspection to be done by a surveyor before you move in, and an official exit inspection to be done when you leave. The cost of the inspections is shared between tenant and landlord (and can amount to several hundred euros). Other landlords are willing to do a more informal inspection, without a surveyor. In this case, we recommend that you take plenty of photos of the property and carefully check the inventory list provided by the landlord (if applicable). The purpose of the inspection is to document the condition of the property when you move in, in such a way that wear & tear and/or damage costs can be calculated on your departure.

**Utilities**

**Gas and Electricity**

There are several energy providers in Belgium (of which https://www.electrabel.be/en/residential is the main one). While most people use the provider already supplying gas and electricity to their home, there is nothing to stop you shopping around to find the cheapest or greenest gas and electricity supplier.

For information on how to choose a supplier, what to do when you move out etc. see www.brugel.be/fr/particuliers

To compare the energy prices of the various suppliers in your neighbourhood, see www.monenergie.be/comparateur-prix-energie-?gclid=CJu3ycbazrMCFaT MtAodRGEAKw

When you move into your home (and when you leave), you need to complete and sign a form and indicate the meter numbers, meter readings and date on which the meters were read, then send the form to the energy provider. There is no charge made for transferring the
meters to the next occupant. If, for any reason, gas and electricity have been disconnected in the property you are moving into, you will need to make an appointment with the energy provider to reopen the meters. You should contact the energy provider at least one week in advance.

**Water**

One company supplies the whole of Brussels: [www.hydrobru.be/index.cfm](http://www.hydrobru.be/index.cfm)

In the event of emergencies, they can be contacted on 02-739.52.11.

When you move into your home (and when you leave), you need to complete and sign a form and indicate the meter number, meter reading and date on which the meter was read, then send the form to the water company. The form can be found in the following link: [www.hydrobru.be/files/0/ibde/FRC%20HYDROBRU_6739351.pdf](http://www.hydrobru.be/files/0/ibde/FRC%20HYDROBRU_6739351.pdf)

**Home insurance**

It is generally stipulated in the rental contract that the tenant must take out tenant liability insurance (to cover him against damage caused to the home and to any furniture/equipment provided by the landlord) plus insurance of his own personal belongings.

Basic home insurance covers damage caused by fire, water, natural disasters. We recommend that you also take out additional insurance to cover expenses incurred in the event of a claim (eg. alternative accommodation if the property is uninhabitable) and to cover your own belongings against theft and damage.

The insurance premium will depend on:
- the surface area and estimated value of the property (including any furniture/equipment provided by the landlord)
- value of your belongings.

It is important that your belongings be insured for the correct value – and against theft both in and outside the home.
Health Insurance and Doctors

Your health insurance will depend on the origin of your funding.

Payment by ULB or another Belgian institution

If you are paid by ULB or another Belgian institution, you will need to register with a Belgian mutuality (“mutualité” or “mutuelle”).

The mutuality will cover your medical expenses (hospital, doctor, dentist, medicine…) and also long term sick leave or maternity leave.

Payment by a non-Belgian institution

There are various options. Please check before travelling to Belgium whether your home country health insurance covers you in Belgium and to what extent.

You may also be able to register with a Belgian mutuality. Please contact the International Welcome Desk for advice or further information.

Choice of mutuality

You are free to choose whichever mutuality you want. A list of mutualities with offices in Brussels is given below:

- Mutualité neutre  www.symbio.be/public
- Euromut  www.euromut.be
- Mutualité socialiste  www.mutsoc.be
- Mutualité chrétienne  www.mc.be
- Mutualité libérale  www.mutualiteliberale.be
- Partena  www.bepartena.be
- Caisse Auxiliaire d’Assurance Maladie-Invalidité  www.caami-hziv.fgov.be

Of these, only Euromut and Partena have an English-speaking customer service centre and can provide registration forms and documentation in English.

We have a privileged partnership with the Partena Expats agency, 41 rue Montoyer, 1000 Brussels. Should you wish to register with them, please call 02 549 75 40 for an appointment (and mention that you are at ULB), or contact the International Welcome Desk.
Registration with the mutuality

You can register with the mutuality online or by going to their office.
You will need to provide:

- **Proof of previous health insurance**
If you had state-provided health insurance before arriving in Belgium, please provide proof of your previous insurance status.

If you come from one of the 27 EU countries, Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway or Switzerland, you should bring your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC).

If you come from another country, you should check with your health insurance provider about the relevant document.

- **Proof of registration at the town hall OR** proof that you have initiated registration (annexe 15).
- **Proof of employment in Belgium** (for Professors/Researchers paid by ULB or another Belgian institution).
The mutuality will give you a form to be completed by the ULB Human Resources department or by your employer.

- **Proof of income and of connection with ULB** (for Professors/Researchers on foreign funding).
- **Proof of registration at ULB** (for students)
- **Family composition document** (if you have dependents)
To be obtained from the town hall after completion of registration.

Dependent family members will only be able to register with the mutuality after completion of the town hall registration process and receipt of the family composition document. It is therefore **essential** that they have alternative health insurance to cover their initial months in Belgium. Please contact the International Welcome Desk for further information.

Reimbursement of medical expenses

When you register with a Belgian mutuality you benefit from the same conditions as a Belgian. You will be covered for medical/dental costs, sick leave, maternity and paternity leave and work-related accidents. You will generally need to pay doctors, dentists, physiotherapists etc. up-front and then request reimbursement from the mutuality.

⇒ Your **mutuality** will provide you with your personal health card, the “SIS card”, which you will need to show at hospitals and pharmacies.
You will also receive stickers to be put on doctors’ receipts when submitting them to the mutuality for reimbursement.

**How much does health insurance cost?**

If you are paid by ULB or another Belgian institution, you are entitled to basic health insurance via the mutuality because you pay social security contributions. If you are paid by a non-Belgian institution or are a student, the amount you need to pay for basic health insurance will be calculated by the mutuality and will depend on your personal situation. In some cases, it may be cheaper for you to take out private health insurance. The [International Welcome Desk](#) will be able to advise you on the best option.

You will also need to subscribe to the mutuality’s “complementary” or “bonus” insurance (costing +/- 8 euros per month). While the basic insurance provided by all mutualities is the same, the content of the complementary or bonus insurance varies slightly from one mutuality to another. The mutuality will issue you with the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) entitling you to receive medically necessary healthcare during a temporary stay in any of the 27 EU countries, Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

**How much does a doctor’s or dentist’s appointment cost?**

You need to pay for each doctor or dentist’s appointment and will then receive a receipt (called “Attestation de soins donnés”).

You then need to put your personal sticker on the receipt and take or send it to the mutuality.
Part of the fee will be reimbursed by the mutuality – and part you will need to cover yourself (the “ticket modérateur”).

The amount you need to pay yourself will depend on whether the doctor/dentist has signed a tariff convention with the mutualities (ie. on whether he/she is “conventionné” or “non-conventionné”).

If you go to a doctor/dentist who has signed the tariff convention (ie. who is “conventionné”), the mutuality will generally reimburse 80% of the fee. Doctors/dentists who have not signed the tariff convention (ie. “non-conventionné”) generally charge higher fees, but the mutuality will only reimburse 75% of the tariff convention fee. This means that you will need to pay a higher proportion of the fee yourself. For example, a general practitioner who has signed the tariff convention will charge around 25€, of which the mutuality will reimburse around 20€. A general practitioner who has not signed the tariff convention may charge around 40€, but the mutuality will still only reimburse 20€.

To avoid unpleasant surprises, we recommend that, before making an appointment, you check whether the doctor/dentist has signed the tariff convention.

Optional additional insurances

The mutuality covers general medical costs (ie. doctor/dentist/physiotherapy appointments, prescribed medicines), but reimbursement of glasses, hearing aids, osteopathy, orthodontic and more specialized dental treatment is very limited. If you are hospitalized, the mutuality will cover the cost of a 2 or 4 bedded room, but you will need to pay a supplement if you want a single-bedded room.

It is possible to take out additional insurance with the mutuality or with a private insurance company to cover such expenses or decrease your personal contribution. Please do not hesitate to ask the International Welcome Desk for further information.

The ULB also proposes hospitalization insurance for members of staff: www.ulb.ac.be/services/personnel/assurances-personnel.html

Doctor/dentist appointments, hospitalization, medication

In Belgium you are free to choose your own doctor, whether general practitioner or specialist, and make appointments directly with them. You do not need to register with a specific general practitioner and you do not need a referral from a general practitioner in order to see a specialist.

The website www.mgbru.be/index_en provides information about general practitioners in Brussels (and the languages they speak).

In the event of hospitalization, and providing you have a SIS card, you will only be invoiced for the part of the bill not covered by the mutuality. The mutuality will pay the rest of the bill directly to the hospital. If your hospitalization is planned in advance, you must inform your mutuality (and private insurance company, if applicable) beforehand.
NB. Your personal contribution to hospitalization costs will depend on the kind of room you choose (single, 2 bedded or 4 bedded) – and will be substantially higher in the event of a single room. Hospitalization insurance (via your mutuality, a private insurance company or ULB) is therefore highly recommended if your preference is for a single room. If you do not have specific hospitalization insurance, we would recommend that you avoid taking a single room (as your personal contribution could reach hundreds or thousands of €).

Do not hesitate to ask your doctor or hospital to give you an estimate of costs prior to hospitalization.

The following link provides a list of hospitals in Belgium: [www.hospitals.be](http://www.hospitals.be)

**Buying medication:** If your doctor has prescribed medication for you, the mutuality will generally cover part of the cost. When you present your SIS card at the pharmacy at the same time as your prescription, you will only need to pay your personal contribution (and the mutuality will pay the rest of the cost directly to the pharmacy).

Basic medicines that are available without prescription are not reimbursed by the mutuality, eg. paracetamol, aspirin, vitamins etc.

To find the nearest pharmacy or a pharmacy open outside the normal working hours, see [www.pharmacie.be](http://www.pharmacie.be). If you purchase medicine outside normal working hours, the pharmacy will often charge a supplement.

Many medicines can only be purchased on prescription. If you require specific long-term medication, we advise that you bring a 2 month supply when you arrive in Belgium, just in case you encounter any delay when registering with the mutuality.

**Repatriation insurance**

Please note that the mutuality will cover the cost of medical expenses in Belgium, but will not repatriate you to your home country in the event of illness or accident. You may therefore wish to take out private repatriation insurance in your home country. Should you do so, we advise you to read the small print carefully (particularly as regards the number of months you can spend abroad). For further information, please contact the [International Welcome Desk](http://www.internationalwelcomedesk.org).
**Tax and social security**

**Income tax**

**PhD students and postdoctoral researchers on a grant**

PhD students and postdoctoral researchers on a grant do not pay income tax, but do need to complete a tax return (“declaration fiscale”). You will need to ask the ULB Human Resources department for your tax exemption certificate and send it to the tax office along with your tax return.

**PhD students, researchers, academics with a ULB employment contract**

PhD students, researchers and academics with a ULB employment contract need to complete a tax return relating to income earned during the previous calendar year. A tax return must be completed by anyone working in Belgium on 1 January of the relevant tax year.


**Unemployment benefits and pension rights**

Belgium has signed many international bilateral social security agreements which take into account increasing international mobility and the need for “exportable” rights to benefits.

Your embassy or consulate should be able to tell you whether such a bilateral agreement exists between your home country and Belgium – and whether, following employment in Belgium, you would be entitled to unemployment benefits or a pension in Belgium or your home country.

Information is also available on [www.socialsecurity.be](http://www.socialsecurity.be), [www.onprvp.fgov.be](http://www.onprvp.fgov.be) and from the ULB Human Resources department.
Information for families

Pre-school childcare

In Belgium, children often start going to a crèche or child-minder at the age of 3 months (at the end of standard maternity leave).

Pre-school childcare is monitored by the “Office de la Naissance et de l’Enfance (ONE) and by “Kind en Gezin”. A list of crèches (for children aged 3 months-3 years), child-minders (for children aged 3 months-3 years) and “prégardiennats” (nursery schools for children aged 18 months to 3 years) that are regularly inspected and approved by these organization can be found on the websites www.one.be and www.kindengezin.be. The ONE requires children to be vaccinated against polio, diphtheria, whooping cough, type b Haemophilus influenzae, measles, rubella (German measles) and mumps – while Kind en Gezin only recommends this.

As there is a shortage of pre-school childcare places, it is important to enroll your child well in advance. Demand is highest for subsidized pre-school childcare, where the amount paid by parents depends on their income. The cost is from 50€ to 650€ per month for French-speaking crèches and child-minders subsidized by the ONE – and from 30€ to 540€ per month for Dutch-speaking crèches and child-minders subsidized by Kind en Gezin. Private crèches and child-minders charge all parents a fixed amount (which can be between +/- €500 and €800 per month).

The ULB has a crèche on the Solbosch campus:
www.ulb.ac.be/services/etudiants/creche.html

and there is a crèche at the ULB’s Erasme hospital:
www.erasme.ulb.ac.be/page.asp?id=9378&langue=FR

Here too, places are limited and in high demand, so it is important to contact the crèche well in advance.

If you are paying income tax in Belgium, you should declare the amount you pay for pre-school child-care on your tax return as a certain proportion is tax-deductible.

Both the “Office de la Naissance et de l’Enfance” and “Kind en Gezin” organize free well-baby clinics at which babies can be weighed, measured and vaccinated and parents can ask for advice on feeding etc.
**Schools**

**Local Belgian schools**

Belgian schools are generally of a good standard. Demand for places at many schools is high, with some schools having long waiting lists, so it is advisable to enroll your child(ren) well in advance. Whenever possible, we would advise that you visit schools – or ask friends or colleagues to visit them for you – before making your choice. There is no centralized listing of available school places, so it is necessary to phone around individual schools in order to check whether they have room.

In Brussels, the language of education in local schools is either French or Dutch, in Wallonia it is French, and in Flanders it is Dutch.

Free schooling is provided in Belgium as from the age of 2 years 6 months/3 years (depending on the school and the child’s date of birth). Many schools offer additional language support for children who do not yet speak French or Dutch.

The Belgian school system is divided into:

- **Pre-Primary school (“Ecole maternelle”): 2 years 6 months/3 to 6**
  
  Free pre-primary education is provided for all children as from the age of 2 years 6 months/3 years (depending on the school and the child’s date of birth).

  It is not compulsory, but more than 90% of children in this age category attend pre-primary school, which lasts for 3 years.

- **Primary school (“Ecole primaire”): 6-12 years**

  Children start primary school on 1 September of the year during which they turn 6. So children born January-August will start primary school when they are already 6, while those born September-December will start primary school when they are still 5. Primary school is compulsory and lasts for 6 years.

  You can search for a pre-primary or primary school via the links:
  
  and


- **Secondary school (“Ecole secondaire”): 12-18 years old**

  Children start secondary school on 1 September of the year during which they turn 12. So children born January-August will move to secondary school when they are already 12, while those born September-December will move to secondary school when they are still 11.

School generally starts at around 8.30 and ends at around 15.30/16.00. Many pre-primary and primary schools offer after-school clubs until around 18.00/18.30.

Note that while local schools are basically free of charge, parents do need to pay for extra-curricular activities, school lunches, school trips and after-school clubs.

For further information on French-speaking local schools, see www.enseignement.be. For further information on Dutch-speaking local schools, see www.ond.vlaanderen.be.

Should you have difficulty finding a school or contacting schools, please do not hesitate to contact the International Welcome Desk.

**International schools**

There are several international schools in Belgium, mainly in the Brussels area. English is the language of education in most of these schools, but there is also a Deutsche Schule, a Lycée Français and a Japanese School. All these schools are fee-paying and expensive.

Brussels is also home to 4 European schools, offering education in the languages of many the countries of the European Union. These schools are primarily intended for the children of officials working for the European institutions and it is exceedingly difficult – if not impossible - for other children to get a place there.

**Babysitters**

If you do not have friends or neighbours who can babysit for you, the “Ligue des Familles” offers a list of trained and recommended babysitters: www.citoyenparent.be/Public/babysitting/.

**Child benefit**

If you receive a salary or fellowship from the ULB or another Belgian institution, you are entitled to receive monthly child benefit (“allocations familiales”) for dependent children and also a fixed sum on the occasion of the birth or adoption of a child.

Monthly child benefit is paid for all dependent children up to the age of 18, and for students up to the age of 25.

If you meet the requirements in www.onafts.be/Fr/Allowance/gfaForeignWho.php, please contact the ULB Human Resources Department for further information.
**Family insurance**

“Family insurance” or “Third party liability insurance” covers the damage you cause to other people or their property. If the policy includes personal legal protection it will also defend your interests should you incur damage.

Schools generally require families to have a family insurance policy, just in case their children cause any damage while at school.

“Family insurance” does not cover you for damage you cause to the property you rent or own.
Campus life

Libraries

Your ULB staff or student card also serves as your library card.
The following link provides information about all the ULB libraries:
www.bib.ulb.ac.be
Visiting researchers can only enroll at the ULB library and access online databases after registration with the International Welcome Desk.

ULB Medical services

ULB has a Medical Centre on the Solbosch campus (building M, phone number 02/650.29.29, voice mail 02/650.35.35), which offers first aid, appointments with general practitioners, specialists and sports doctors. It is open Monday-Friday from 8.00 to 18.30, and on Saturday from 9.00 to 13.00.
At the same address, you will also find a preventive medicine service and and Info-Sida (AIDS information and support service).
There is no dentist at the ULB medical centre, but a private dental practice close to the Solbosch campus offers reduced rates to ULB students (Cabinet Lenertz, 128 av. G. Bergmann, 1050 Brussels, 02/640.86.78).
A team of psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers offers individual and confidential support to ULB staff and students at “Psycampus”. Psycampus is open Monday-Friday from 8.30 to 12.30 and from 14.00 to 16.30 (closed on Tuesday morning) and is located 127 avenue Buyl, 1050 Brussels. For appointments, phone 02/650.20.25. Psycampus also offers appointments at the Erasmus campus once per week.

ULB-Culture

ULB-Culture organizes Ciné-Club projections, concerts, exhibitions. The office is on the Solbosch Campus, Building F1, level 4, Tel. 02/650.21.57. Full details of activities organised can be found in www.ulb.ac.be/culture.

ULB Sports

A wide range of sports activities are organized on the ULB Campuses. For further details, see www.esprit-ulbsports.eu/programme.php
An annual card (60€) will give you access to collective sports lessons and a reduced price for sports infrastructures.

**Food**

There are several cafes and restaurants on the Solbosch (building F1), Plaine and Erasme campuses offering a wide variety of food at democratic prices.

There are also restaurants, cafes and supermarkets in the vicinity of the three campuses.

Students in the Medicine faculty can use the hospital canteens during their internship at the hospital.

A market selling locally produced and organic food is held on the Solbosch campus (avenue Paul Héger) every Tuesday, from 16.00 to 18.30.

**Internet and e-mail**

Free Wi-Fi access is provided on the ULB campuses. All ULB staff and students receive a ULB email address. Once you have your ULB identification number, you can log on at a computer in the library and submit a “formulaire de demande d'activation d'un compte” on the ULB website.

Visiting researchers can only receive a ULB email address after registration with the International Welcome Desk.

**Travel**

A travel agency is located on the Solbosch campus (building F1) and is open Monday to Friday from 9.00 to 17.30 (Tel. 02/650.37.72).

If your trip is being paid for by ULB, you may book it at this travel agency using an internal invoice – “bon blanc”.

For further information, see [www.servicevoyages.be/1000-service-voyages-ulb.html#T6jsMtkYTjY](http://www.servicevoyages.be/1000-service-voyages-ulb.html#T6jsMtkYTjY).

**Campus maps**

Maps of the Solbosch, Plain, Erasme and Gosselies campuses can be found in the following link:

[www.ulb.ac.be/campus/index.html](http://www.ulb.ac.be/campus/index.html)
**Banking**

**Academics and researchers**

In order to open an account at a Belgian bank, academics and researchers paid by ULB or another Belgian institution need to provide the following documents:

- passport or identity card
- signed rental contract
- employment contract.

As soon as you have completed the town hall registration process, you will need to give the bank a copy of your Belgian residence permit.

For certain nationalities, the bank will also require proof that you have initiated registration at the town hall (Annexe 15).

**Students**

In order to open a bank account, **EU Students** need to provide:

- passport or identity card
- proof of enrolment at ULB
- rental contract
- proof that you have initiated registration at the town hall (Annexe 15) **OR** proof of address in your home country.

**Non-EU students** need to provide:

- passport
- proof of enrolment at ULB
- rental contract
- proof that you have initiated registration at the town hall (Annexe 15).

It is very difficult for Non-EU students to open a bank account without the Annexe 15 document. In some cases, the bank may exceptionally agree to open an account on the basis of official proof of residence in your home country (e.g. Driving license, social security card or other official document that includes your address).

As soon as you have completed the town hall registration process, you will need to give the bank a copy of your Belgian residence permit.

The banks closest to the ULB are:

- **ING**

Solbosch Campus: 22 Avenue Paul Héger, 1050 Brussels (in the basement of building F).

La Plaine Campus: 2 Boulevard de la Plaine, 1050 Brussels
ING also has a dedicated expat banking service:

www.ing.be/en/expats

- **BNP Paribas - Fortis**

Solbosch/La Plaine campuses: 3 Square du Vieux Tilleul, 1050 Bruxelles.

ULB-Hôpital Erasme: 808, Route de Lennik, 1070 Brussels

www.bnpparibasfortis.be/portal/start_BE_F.asp
In Brussels, the public transport company (which runs buses, trams and metros) is called “STIB”: [www.stib.be](http://www.stib.be).


**Tickets**

One ticket entitles you to a 1-hour journey on the STIB network (except for the NATO-Brussels Airport section of lines 12 and 21), during which you can change vehicle as many times as you like. The ticket is also valid on the urban networks of DE LIJN and TEC and on trains within Brussels.

Tickets are sold in STIB selling points (metro stations, vending machines at tram or bus stops, supermarkets). It is also possible to buy a one journey ticket in the bus or tram, but it is much more expensive.

You can also buy a personalized card called “Mobib” at the STIB shop, on which you can load tickets or season tickets.


**Prices :**

1 journey: 2.50 € if purchased inside a vehicle, 2.00 € if purchased prior to travel, 1.80 € with a MOBIB card

10 journeys: 13.00 € if purchased at a STIB selling point, 11.80€ with a MOBIB card.

**Season ticket:**
You are a student aged under 25

On production of proof of registration at ULB, you can purchase an annual season ticket ("abonnement scolaire") for 102€. This is also valid on night buses.

You are aged 25 to 64

1 month season ticket : 47.50€; annual season ticket : 499.00€

On Friday and Saturday nights, from 0.15 to 3.00, STIB runs a network of night buses, called “Noctis”. For more information on the Noctis network see www.stib.be/noctis.html?l=en.

Taxis

Taxis in Brussels are quite expensive. If you need a taxi, it is best to book it by phone, as there are generally few available on the streets. Official taxis are black, with a yellow stripe, as shown in the picture.

You should expect to pay 1.60 - 2.70€/kilometer, an initial tax of 2.40 – 4.40€ per ride, plus 50 cents per minute if you are in a traffic jam.

The two main taxi companies in Brussels are:

Taxi Vert : 02/ 349.49.49 www.taxisverts.be
Taxi Bleu : 02/ 268.00.00 www.taxisbleus.be

The STIB public transport company offers a collective taxi service - “Collecto” - between 23.00 and 6.00. There are around 200 pick-up points around the city (at STIB bus or tram stops) and the taxi will drop you off wherever you want in Brussels. It may take some time to get home, but the ride costs only 6€ (or 5€ if you have a STIB MOBIB card). The collective taxi has to be booked in advance and when making the booking you need to give the stop where you will be waiting for the taxi, your name, and your destination address. For precise information on how to book a “Collecto” see www.bruxellesmobilite.irisnet.be/articles/taxi/reserver-un-collecto (which includes a link to a trilingual brochure). For further information see www.collecto.org.
**Trains**

Even if you live in Brussels, the train is sometimes a good way of getting around or across the city. The closest train stations to the Solbosch and Plaine campuses are “Boondael” and “Etterbeek”.

The train is often the fastest way of going from one city to another, as motorways are generally congested. Various kinds of tickets can be purchased: one way, 10-trip cards and season tickets. For the under 26s, the “Go Pass 10” (costing 50€ and valid for 10 trips) is a good idea, and you can use it to travel to any destination in Belgium. The “Go Pass 10” can also be used by a group of friends. For more information see [www.belgianrail.be/en/travel-tickets/passes-cards/go-pass-10.aspx](http://www.belgianrail.be/en/travel-tickets/passes-cards/go-pass-10.aspx)


**Cycling**

There are two bike rental schemes in Brussels:

- **Villo!**, with bike stations throughout the city
- **Blue Bike**, with bike stations at North, Central, South and Luxembourg stations in Brussels (plus many more stations throughout the country).

With **Villo!**, the first half hour of any journey is free, and you then pay between 0.5€ and 2€ for each additional half hour. The annual membership fee is 32€. You can subscribe to the system via [http://en.villo.be](http://en.villo.be). For information about availability of bikes, see [www.wheresmyvillo.be/](http://www.wheresmyvillo.be/).

With **Blue Bike**, you can rent a bike for a whole day for 3€, after paying an annual membership fee of 10€. For further information see [http://www.scotty.be/fr/sites/blue-bike](http://www.scotty.be/fr/sites/blue-bike).
Take care not to get your tyres stuck in tramlines and to give priority to vehicles coming from the right at crossroads.

**Car-sharing**

Brussels has an excellent and moderately priced car-sharing scheme called “Cambio”, with stations throughout the city. For further information and prices see [www.cambio.be/](http://www.cambio.be/).

**Driving licence**

Not all driving licences are recognized in Belgium. Whether or not your current licence is recognized will depend on the country of issue and the date on which you obtained it.

Driving licences from most other European countries are valid in Belgium and no longer have to be exchanged for a Belgian licence. However, it is advisable to register your national licence with the driving licence department at your local town hall – or exchange it for a Belgian one – as it will then be easier to replace in the event of loss or theft. If your driving licence is recognized in Belgium, you can exchange it for a Belgian one as soon as you have completed the town hall registration process and obtained a Belgian residence permit. You simply need to go to your local town hall, hand in your current driving licence and provide an ID photo. Your new licence should be ready in 2-3 weeks.

If you come from a non-European country which has signed a bilateral agreement with Belgium regarding recognition of driving licences, you can exchange your current driving licence for a Belgian one (and it is mandatory to do so as soon as you have completed the town hall registration process and obtained a Belgian residence permit). You will need to provide proof that you resided for at least 6 months in the country that issued the licence and, depending on the language of the licence, may need to provide a certified translation into French or Dutch.

If you come from a country that has not signed a bilateral agreement with Belgium regarding recognition of driving licences, you will need to take (and pass) the Belgian theoretical and practical driving tests in order to be able to continue driving here.

For further information on driving licences, contact the driving licence service (“Service Permis de Conduire”) at your local town hall, or see [www.mobilit.fgov.be](http://www.mobilit.fgov.be).

To check whether your driving licence is recognized in Belgium, see [http://www.mobilit.belgium.be/fr/](http://www.mobilit.belgium.be/fr/)

**Car importation and registration**

If you are importing a car or motorbike into Belgium, you will need to register it here and apply for number plates as soon as you have completed the town hall registration procedure.
The first step is to clear the vehicle through customs. The customs clearance department is located 11 Rue de l’Entrepôt, 1020 Brussels (Tel. 02 575 62 05; opening hours 8.00-11.30 and 13.00-15.30) and you will need to submit the following documents: European Certificate of Conformity, vehicle invoice and foreign registration document.

If the vehicle is more than 4 years old, it will need to undergo a technical inspection.

Once you have received customs clearance for your vehicle, you will need to apply for Belgian number plates at the “Direction des Immatriculations des Véhicules” (DIV), located 56 Rue du Progrès, 1210 Brussels (Tel: 02 277 30 50 and 02 277 31 11), pay a one-off circulation tax and arrange for car insurance. For further information, please contact the International Welcome Desk.

**Car insurance**

If you have a car, motorbike or moped, it is mandatory to take out third party insurance in Belgium.

Third party insurance covers damage caused to other people and vehicles – but does not cover the driver or car responsible for the accident.

To cover any damage you cause to yourself or to your own vehicle, you will need to take out “fully comprehensive” insurance. Car insurance can be arranged through your bank or an insurance broker. For further information, please contact the International Welcome Desk.
If you would like to improve your knowledge of local languages, there are numerous options available to you. Language lessons are organized by ULB, the local authorities, the French and Flemish communities and private language schools.

**Language lessons**

Information (in English) about French lessons organized for foreigners in each municipality of Brussels can be found on the website of the “Maison de la Francité”.

www.maisondelafrancite.be/index/pages/id_page-95/parent-51/lang-fr/

The website provides information about lessons subsidized by the local authorities (eg. “Cours de Promotion sociale”, “Cours du Soir”) and also about private language schools.

Fondation 9 [www.f9languages.eu](http://www.f9languages.eu) offers special rates for ULB students and researchers.

Other language schools offering courses in a variety of languages at democratic prices are:

http://www.cvo-khnb.net/en/indexen.htm

Both schools are close to the La Plaine campus.

For information about Dutch lessons in Brussels, see [www.huisnederlandsbrussel.be/home](http://www.huisnederlandsbrussel.be/home)

Foreign students who are enrolled at the ULB may follow French lessons coordinated by the “Cellule Langues”:

Phone, Internet, Cable Television

There are 3 main mobile phone networks in Belgium (Proximus, Mobistar and Base) and a multitude of other providers piggy-backing on these networks. It is possible to opt for a contract or a pay-as-you-go-scheme.

If you are not a heavy mobile phone user you may find it better to start with a pay-as-you go card. You can keep your mobile number should you change payment plan and/or operator. Contracts must be taken for a minimum of 6 months.

For further information, see:

www.proximus.be
www.mobistar.be
www.base.be
www.carrefourmobile.be (Low rates and no contracts)
www.lycamobile.be (good option if you give many calls outside Belgium)
www.mobilevikings.com (good option if you have a smartphone, want data but do not want to take a contract)

If you are interested a package covering internet, cable TV, mobile and/or home phone, the best options are:

www.belgacom.be
www.numericable.be
www.voo.be
www.mobistar.be

On campus you can access wireless internet using your ULB login and password.
Daily life in Belgium

Cost of living

The table in the following link will enable you to check consumer price index, rent index, groceries index, restaurant prices and local purchasing power in Belgium in comparison with those in 250 other countries:

www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/rankings.jsp

For prices in Brussels, see:

www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/city_result.jsp?country=Belgium&city=Brussels

The cost of living in Belgium is quite high, and a single person will need an annual budget of around 11,000€.

Travel and accommodation expenses will make the biggest hole in your budget. Your actual expenses will, of course, depend on your lifestyle.

In addition to travel and accommodation costs, you should allow, per month

- +/- 200€ for food
- +/- 30€ for health insurance and medical fees
- +/- 100-200€ for utilities, if not included in the rent
- +/- 30€ for internet, 20€ for cable TV and 20€ for mobile phone.

Supermarkets and Markets

The cheapest supermarkets are the German chains Lidl and Aldi; of the Belgian supermarkets Colruyt has the best price/quality ratio.

Carrefour and Delhaize offer good quality products, but are somewhat more expensive.

You can check where the supermarkets are located via

www.lidl.be/cps/rde/xchg/lidl_be/hs.xsl/4222.htm
http://aldi-bf.aldi.be/
www.colruyt.be/colruyt/static/1024/colruytwinkels_f.shtml
www.carrefour.eu/fr/store
Another good option to buy fresh vegetables and fruit, meat, fish, spices etc. at the open air markets. The biggest open air market is held on Sunday, from 9h to 13h next to the Gare du Midi.

You can find a complete list of markets at www.cityplug.be/fr/pages/blog/81_Les-marches-a-Bruxelles.html.

**Leisure activities**

Brussels is a multicultural city offering a broad range of activities. If you stop by the International Welcome Desk on arrival in Belgium, we can provide you with maps and guides.


The most popular sights in Brussels are the Grand’Place, the Manneken Pis statue, the Monts des Arts, the Royal Palace, the Atomium, etc.

Brussels has several excellent museums, among which are

- the comic strip museum www.comicscenter.net/en/home
- the Royal Museum of Art and History http://www.kmkg-mrah.be/cinquantenaire-museum


A full list of museums in Brussels can be found at http://www.brusselmuseums.be/en/musee-liste.php

The websites www.agenda.be and www.quefaire.be are good sources of information about what is going on – and www.cinenews.be provides cinema programmes throughout Belgium.

Last minute tickets for theatre and cinema can be bought through www.arsene50.be.

To discover Brussels through the eyes of a local, contact: www.brusselsgreeters.be/Bienvenue.php or check out the website www.spottedbylocals.com/brussels/
Before leaving Belgium

Contact the tax authorities and give them a forwarding address. For more information on the steps to be taken see [www.socialsecurity.be/CMS/fr/leaving_belgium/index.html](http://www.socialsecurity.be/CMS/fr/leaving_belgium/index.html)

Return your residence permit (and work permit, if applicable) to the town hall.

Contact your mutuality and cancel your health insurance.

Cancel home and family insurance.

If you are selling your car, organize the mandatory technical inspection, cancel car insurance and return car number plates to the DIV.

Inform your bank that you are leaving Belgium, but only close your account after payment of final utility and credit card bills.

Consider having your post redirected: [www.bpost.be/site/fr/residential/index.html](http://www.bpost.be/site/fr/residential/index.html)
Useful websites

For newcomers to Belgium
www.expatarrivals.com/belgium/cost-of-living-in-belgium
www.xpats.com
www.expatica.com/be/main.html
http://belgium.angloinfo.com/
www.blbe.be

Leisure activities
www.visitbrussels.be
www.shopinbrussels.be
www.resto.be
www.brusselslife.be
www.use-it.be
www.biponline.be

Foreign embassies and consulates in Belgium
ULB Contact persons

International Welcome Desk

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Emergency numbers
Solbosch, Plaine, Gosselies and Parentville campuses – dial 7 from a landline
Erasme campus – dial 22 from a landline
Other campuses – dial 112
If no landline available or off campus:
Ambulance and fire brigade – 100
European emergency number - 112
Police - 101