



2025 • 2026

ULB

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International  
student's

# GUIDE

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GET STARTED IN BELGIUM

# INTRODUCTION

This guide, for international students coming to Belgium, aims to help you to settle in Belgium and guide you in your administrative procedures.

However, it cannot cover all situations and particular requests. It is therefore not exhaustive and does not detail every procedure that you must carry out.

Regarding visas and residence permits, please refer to the website of [the Immigration Office Immigration Office | IBZ](#) and contact the Belgian Embassy in your country. We would like to remind you that the ULB International Welcome Desk can help you with questions relating to visas and residence permits. However, we are not in a position to speed up the application process with the Immigration Office or the town halls.

For any other questions, please contact us at [welcome@ulb.be](mailto:welcome@ulb.be).



# CONTENTS

1	Belgium and Brussels	6
2	ULB, a free-thinking university!	8
3	Preparing for ULB	9
4	Arriving in Brussels	10
5	Studying at ULB	12
6	Commune registration	14
7	Cost of living	18
8	Accommodation	19
9	Getting around in Brussels	22
10	Healthcare and insurance	24
11	Student life	26
12	Information for families	27
13	Learning french	29
14	Bank account	30
15	Other information	31
16	Need help?	32
17	Leaving Brussels and Belgium	34
18	ULB as an exchange student	36
19	Useful contacts for exchange students	38
20	Campus maps	40

## BELGIUM AND BRUSSELS

Belgium is a federal state consisting of three regions: Brussels (the bilingual capital where French and Dutch are spoken), Flanders to the north and Wallonia to the south. The official languages are French, Dutch, and German.

Although it is a small country, Belgium has its fair share of celebrities. They include the famous composers and singers Jacques Brel and Stromae; the actors Benoît Poelvoorde and Matthias Schoenaerts; the writers Amélie Nothomb and Maurice Maeterlinck (Nobel Prize for Literature in 1911); the artists and cartoonists Georges Rémi (Hergé, 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 painter René Magritte; the architect Victor Horta; and the athletes Eddy Merckx (cyclist), Eden Hazard (football) and Nafissatou Thiam (athletics).

Belgium would not be Belgium without its mouth-watering chocolates, its wide range of local beers and mussels served with French fries! Belgium has many historical, artistic, gastronomic, architectural and natural wonders which we cannot wait for you to discover during your stay here.



### Bruxelles, ma belle

Brussels is among the world's most diverse capitals, home to the headquarters of the European Union, NATO, and countless international companies and organisations. While the main working languages are French and Dutch, the fact that there is an incredible number of different nationalities present in the city makes it a modern-day Tower of Babel.

Brussels is a very lively city that boasts many cultural activities: you can enjoy concerts, theatres, cinemas, exhibitions and shows of all kinds, as well as beautiful museums and monuments, such as the world-famous Grand Place or the many Art Nouveau buildings.

Brussels is also one of Europe's greenest cities with many parks and forests in and around it. Its manageable size and its cultural and economic energy create an outstanding living environment.

In addition, with the Thalys train you are only an hour and a half from Paris. Which brings us to yet another benefit of being in Brussels: it is also just a short hop away from London and Amsterdam.

### For more information about Brussels

[You can visit the official Brussels Tourist Office website.](#)





## ULB, A FREE-THINKING UNIVERSITY!

ULB was founded in 1834, just four years after Belgium's independence. At the very beginning, ULB only had 96 students. Today there are over 38,000, 32% coming from abroad. With twelve faculties, two schools and one institute, ULB covers all disciplines and all academic levels.

Initially based solely in Brussels, ULB has extended its activities to Wallonia and now has a network of research centres, hospitals and libraries, all with cutting-edge equipment.

The "L" in ULB's name stands for libre, French for "free". Libre refers to an attitude of free thinking, as adopted by free individuals, who reject all dogma and totalitarian ideas. It signifies our moral commitment to always keeping our freedom of conscience. This means that through their teachings, our University's academic staff will develop your critical thinking skills and train you to engage in free thinking.

Today, ULB is a world-renowned French-speaking University and has many courses and degrees in English.

## Campuses

The Université libre de Bruxelles has several campuses. Depending on your field of study, you will be either in Brussels (Solbosch, La Plaine, Flagey, Usquare or Erasme campus) or outside Brussels on the Charleroi or Gosselies campus.

## For more information:

[Maps and access \(page 40\)](#)

## Did you know?

Our University has a long-standing tradition of excellence, as evidenced by the many accolades given in recognition of its researchers, professors and alumni: four Nobel Prizes in science (including François Englert in 2013), two Nobel Peace Prizes (including Denis Mukwege in 2018), a Fields Medal, three Wolf Prizes, two Abel Prizes and many more.

## PREPARING FOR ULB

### Visa application and procedure

If you come from outside the European Union, you will need a visa to enter Belgian territory. You can obtain one at the Belgian embassy or consulate in your home country. Please find out the conditions for obtaining a student visa by contacting the Belgian embassy or consulate closest to your place of residence.

Once you have been accepted to ULB you will receive an admission letter from the University. This document is required as part of your student visa application. You should finalise the application process for your student visa as quickly as possible. After obtaining your visa, you must confirm your registration to ULB by 30 September at the latest.

Documents required in order to obtain a visa:

- ULB's admission letter
- Proof of sufficient financial means to live in Belgium
- A medical certificate
- A copy of a criminal record check
- A passport valid for at least 12 months
- A completed and signed visa application form
- Proof of health insurance (see «Health care and insurance» section)
- Proof of payment of fees
- Standard form (attached to your admission letter, available via «MonULB»)

**Note for non-European students who have begun their studies in France:** All students holding a French residence permit must obtain a residence permit valid for the entire duration of their stay in Belgium, before arriving in the country. Please note that the French residence permit application receipt does not constitute valid proof.

### For more information, please visit:

[The Belgian Foreign Affairs website.](#)  
[The Belgian Immigration Office.](#)  
[Information on the proof of sufficient financial means and the blocked accounts service.](#)

## Checklist

- Make sure you have a valid passport and/or ID
- Check the visa and entry requirements for Belgium
- If necessary, apply for a visa
- Plan your daily/monthly/yearly budget
- Anticipate your medical needs
- Prepare for your trip

## Follow up your visa application

You can track the status of your visa application on the Immigration Office (Office des Étrangers) website: [Follow up a visa application | IBZ](#). We advise you to submit your visa application as soon as possible.

# ARRIVING IN BRUSSELS

It is very easy to get around Brussels by public transport.

The majority of visitors travel by plane, landing at one of the two major airports that serve the city: Brussels Airport (Zaventem) and Charleroi Airport (also known as Brussels South). Others take a train to the Gare du Midi (Brussels South Station).

## From Brussels Airport Zaventem

Brussels' main airport is very well connected to the city centre, allowing you to travel easily by train, bus, taxi, car sharing or picking up a rental car. The train into the city centre only takes 17 minutes; the bus to the European Quarter downtown takes a little longer (30 minutes) but is also a little cheaper. If you have a lot of luggage, particularly if you are travelling in a group, you may want to consider getting a taxi. It will cost you around €50 to get to the centre, but the convenience is well worth the cost if you split the fare between 3 or 4 people.

## From Charleroi Airport

The Flibco shuttle company is the most convenient way to get to Brussels from Charleroi airport. If you do decide to travel to Brussels by taxi, expect a €100 fare for the whole vehicle.



Bus times are also scheduled to fit in with the flight times and buses start running at 3.30 am. There is a bus every 20 to 30 minutes. To get the fairest price, you can pre-book your ticket online.

## Getting here by train

You can easily travel to Brussels by train from abroad. The Eurostar and Thalys make it possible to reach Brussels from several stations in France as well as from London, and the national lines also connect all regions of the country to the capital.

# Getting to ULB (Brussels)

How to get to...	The Solbosch Campus	The Erasme Campus	The La Plaine Campus
From Gare Centrale (Central Station)	Take the <b>number 71 bus heading towards Delta</b> and get off at the "ULB" stop.	Take <b>metro line 5 heading towards Erasme</b> and get off at the last stop.	Take <b>metro line 5 heading towards Hermann-Debroux</b> and get off at the "Delta" stop.
From Gare du Nord (North Station)	Take the <b>number 25 tram heading towards Boondael</b> and get off at the "ULB" stop.	Take the <b>number 3 tram heading towards Churchill</b> and get off at the "De Brouckère" stop. Then take <b>metro line 5 heading towards Erasme</b> and get off at the last stop.	Take the <b>metro line 6 heading towards Roi Baudouin</b> and get off at the "Arts-Loi" stop. Then take <b>metro line 5 heading towards Hermann-Debroux</b> and get off at the "Delta" stop.
From Gare du Midi (South Station)	Take the <b>number 81 tram heading towards Montgomery</b> and get off at the "Montgomery" stop. Then take the <b>number 25 tram heading towards Boondael</b> and get off at the "ULB" stop.	Take <b>metro line 6 heading towards Roi Baudouin</b> and get off at the "Gare de l'Ouest" stop. Then take <b>metro line 5 heading towards Erasme</b> and get off at the last stop.	Take <b>metro line 6 heading towards Roi Baudouin</b> and get off at the "Arts-Loi" stop. Then take <b>metro line 5 heading towards Hermann-Debroux</b> and get off at the "Delta" stop.
From Etterbeek Station	Take the <b>number 25 tram heading towards Boondael</b> and get off at the "ULB" stop.	Take the <b>number 25 tram heading towards Rogier</b> and get off at the "Pétillon" stop. Then take <b>metro line 5 heading towards Erasme</b> and get off at the last stop.	Take the <b>number 95 bus heading towards Wiener</b> and get off at the "Thys" stop.

# Getting to ULB (Charleroi)

How to get to...	Charleroi Campus	Gosselies Campus
From Gare de Charleroi Central (Charleroi Central Station)	Take <b>metro line M4 heading towards Gilly Soleilmont</b> and get off at the "Charleroi Waterloo" stop.	Take the number 68 bus and get off at the "Gosselies ULB (Aéroport)" stop.

## STUDYING AT ULB

### The academic calendar 2025 -2026

The academic year begins in mid-September. The first semester ends in January; the second semester runs from February to June. [Here](#) you will find the indicative dates of the holidays and exams. Please note that some of your classes may exceptionally take place during these periods, too.

### Registration for classes

Most of our faculties do not require students to register prior to participating in their classes. Students attend classes after finding out 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 near the faculty Secretariats.

[Timeedit](#) is the platform where you will find all the information on your class and examination timetables. It features a private section (My timetable) and a public section (Level, Course or Teacher timetable).



### Programme structure

One year of studies for a full-time student is worth 60 credits (i.e. 1,800 hours of work on average).

Each course (Course Unit or CU) is worth a certain number of credits, which represent the student's workload. At ULB, all CUs are worth either 5 or a multiple of 5 credits, except for courses organised by non-University partners. For every course you pass, you will be awarded the related number of credits.

### Grading system

Following exams (oral and/or written), the final assessment will take the form of a grade of 0 to 20. To pass a course unit, you need to get a grade of at least 10/20.

ULB uses the ECTS grading table to offer students the opportunity to compare their exam results with those of a larger student population (on a faculty level or for the whole university).

At the end of an exchange stay at ULB, exam results are sent by the host faculty directly to the exchange student's home university.







## COMMUNE REGISTRATION

### Short stay (less than 3 months)

If you're staying in a hotel, you don't need to register with the commune: the hotel will do it for you.

**EU nationals:** if you are not staying in a hotel, it is advisable to go to the commune (with a valid passport or identity card) within 10 days of your arrival in Belgium to obtain a declaration of presence, valid for the duration of your stay (maximum 3 months).

**Non-EU nationals:** if you are not staying in a hotel, you must go to the commune within 3 days of your arrival in Belgium to obtain a declaration of arrival, valid for the duration of your stay (maximum 3 months). You'll need your passport and a passport photo. The procedure is free of charge.

### Long stay (over 3 months)

If your stay in Belgium exceeds 3 months, you must register with your commune of residence and apply for a residence permit. The residence permit is compulsory, including for EU citizens (registration certificate), and you must carry it with you at all times. For non-European Economic Area citizens, it replaces the entry visa, allowing them to travel throughout the Schengen area and to re-enter (for example, if you're spending the holidays in your home country).

#### **Note for non-European students who have begun their studies in**

**France:** all students holding a French residence permit must obtain a residence permit valid for the entire duration of their stay in Belgium, before arriving in the country. Please note that the French residence permit application receipt does not constitute valid proof for the Belgian immigration office.

### Obtaining a residence permit (long stay: over 3 months)

Officially, you are required to register with the Immigration Office ("Office des Étrangers") in your commune within 8 days of your arrival in Belgium (notification on your visa). In practice, however, this deadline is difficult to meet (time to get an appointment at the commune, difficulty in finding permanent accommodation, etc.). You can therefore exceed this deadline. However, you must register with the commune within three months of your arrival.

To register with the commune, you must have a permanent home (domiciliation possible – see "Housing" section). You cannot register with a temporary address (Airbnb, hotel...).

Registration procedures vary from one commune to another, so we recommend that you check your commune's website before you go. You will be asked to present your identity card or passport, as well as your ULB registration certificate.

A few days after your visit to the commune, a police officer will pay you a visit to check that you actually live at the address you have given. Don't forget to display your name on your letterbox and/or doorbell. A few days after the officer's visit, you'll receive a notification to finalise the registration process at the commune, with the list of documents to be provided at this second appointment: ID, passport photos and payment for your card (between €20 and €25 depending on the commune).

At this second appointment, you will receive a temporary document, the Annexe 15, pending receipt of your residence permit.

Please note that it is not possible to travel outside Belgium with the Annexe 15; you must have your residence permit to do so.

## Renewing your residence permit

### Checklist

- Check your commune's website before going there
- Register at your local Immigration Office
- Apply for a residence permit
- Put your name on your letterbox and doorbell
- Wait for the police officer's visit
- Finalise your registration process at the commune
- Do not forget to notify your commune when you leave Belgium

It is advisable to start the renewal procedure at least 60 days before the expiry date of your residence permit with the commune in which you reside. Your file will then be forwarded to the Immigration Office, which will make the final decision.

It can take between 2 and 3 months for the Immigration Office to process your application to renew your residence permit.

We advise you not to plan any trips

outside Belgium until you have received your new residence permit. If you need to travel urgently for any reason, please contact the International Welcome Desk.

If the renewal procedure is started 15 days or less before the expiry date of your residence permit, you will have to pay an additional administrative fee of €204 and the renewal procedure will take considerably longer.

For non-EU students: finalise your re-registration at ULB and start the

residence permit renewal procedure on time.





## COST OF LIVING

A student will need around €14,000 for a year, excluding travel costs. Accommodation will be the biggest expense item in your budget. Your actual expenses will of course depend on your lifestyle. In addition to accommodation costs, per month you should allow at least:

- €250 for food
- €30 for health insurance and medical fees
- €100 - €200 for service charges not included in the rent
- €30 for internet and €20 for your mobile phone

The cost of living in Belgium is not exactly low but it is still cheaper than other EU countries, despite being home to the EU headquarters. It is close enough to other popular European destinations like Germany, France and Austria. Given this proximity, students in Belgium can enjoy regular trips to these countries. You can compare and calculate it here: [Current cost-of-living index on a map \(numbeo.com\)](https://numbeo.com/cost-of-living/index.php?city=Brussels&country=Belgium)



### Utility costs

In Brussels, you can expect to pay about €125 a month for utilities, which generally includes electricity, water, heating and waste collection, for an apartment measuring around 85 sqm. Depending on your area, this estimate may vary, but not by much. The monthly rent for student accommodation often includes utility costs but be sure to check with your landlord beforehand.

### Accommodation

As it is the capital of Belgium, you can expect higher rents in Brussels and more competition for rentals than elsewhere in Belgium. In Brussels city centre, prices average around €850 to €950 per month for a two-bedroom apartment or €400 to €550 for a student room or studio ("kot").

## ACCOMMODATION

Most students live in private housing. The cost of sharing a private flat is around €400 - €550 per person.

### Long-term accommodation

If you are planning to spend several months or years at ULB, you will need to look for long-term accommodation. The rental market is fast-moving and there are many options available at various prices.

The neighbourhoods most favoured by our students at the Solbosch and La Plaine campuses are Ixelles, Etterbeek, Auderghem, Saint-Gilles and Bruxelles-Ville. If you want to check how conveniently-located an apartment is for ULB, you can use [the public transport website](https://www.mtc.be/mtc/fr/transport-public/les-lignes-de-tram-et-de-metro).

### Domiciliation

If you are staying in Belgium for more than three months, you must be able to register with your municipality using the address of the accommodation you are renting in your own name. You must therefore check that domiciliation is possible. If your rental agreement states that you cannot register your address (e.g. if you are subletting), we advise you not to take up this accommodation, as you will then be unable to register with the commune and apply for your residence permit.

If you are staying with family or friends, it is possible to register your address. In this case, your hosts must make an appointment with their municipality to declare that they are hosting you. You will then be officially domiciled with these persons.

### Let's find you a home!

The ULB Housing Office can support you in your search for suitable accommodation and advise you on many aspects of student housing.

Their webpage lists a wide range of accommodation options, including university and private residences.

#### ULB Accommodation

Helpful tip: have a look at the ads that international students who are moving out put up near the restaurants and lecture halls.

If you would prefer to book in advance, ULB has a partnership with [Studapart](#), a platform that enables you to book private accommodation from your home. On this platform, you can see pictures and videos of different places, and even chat with the landlord before making a booking securely.

You can also use these websites:

- [Studenco](#)
- [Appartager](#)
- [Immoweb](#)
- [Mykot](#)
- [Brukot](#)
- [ImmoVlan](#)
- [BNB Brussels](#)
- [Vivastreet](#)
- [Student.be](#)



## Rental contracts

Most rental contracts are for 3 years or less and are generally fixed-term contracts, which cannot be broken without payment of penalties. Short-term rental contracts are often negotiated for furnished accommodation. Before signing the contract, take care to clarify the notice period and compensation due in the event of an early termination of the contract.

We recommend that, whatever the type of rental contract, you always try to negotiate the inclusion of a clause authorising you to find someone to replace you, should you need to break the rental contract earlier than planned, and thereby avoid payment of any compensation.

The first month's rent must be paid when the rental contract is being signed. In addition, before you receive the keys, you will need to arrange tenant liability insurance (this service is offered by banks,

among others) and set up a rental deposit (generally the equivalent of 2 months' rent). We advise you to put the rental deposit into a blocked account in your name at the bank – see Bank account.

## Good to know

Some landlords require an official entry inspection to be done by an expert before you can move in. An official exit inspection will also be done when you leave. The cost of the inspection is shared between the tenant and the landlord (the amount can be several hundred euros depending on the type of accommodation). Some landlords are willing to do a more informal inspection without a professional. In this case, we recommend that you take plenty of photos and carefully check the inventory provided by the landlord.

### Recycling your rubbish

In Brussels, sorting and recycling your rubbish is compulsory (failing

to recycle can result in fines).

You need to buy special bags sold in supermarkets and groceries:

- Blue bags: for food and drink cartons, plastic bottles, cans, aluminium...
- Yellow bags: paper and cardboard
- White bags: residual waste (all the rest, except for glass)
- Orange bags: food waste (meat, fish, vegetable and fruit peelings, coffee, paper towels, handkerchiefs, napkins, etc.) - these may not be in use/mandatory in all districts.

Collection days vary depending on your district and the bag colour. Please check the collection days [here](#).

Glass bottles and jars must be brought directly to [the glass container closest to your home](#).

## GETTING AROUND IN BRUSSELS

From the city centre train station to the very outskirts of the city, public transport in Brussels has you covered. The smart integration of buses, trams, metro and trains means that you can get wherever you need to go with minimal hassle and usually within a short journey time.

The price of a single ticket inside Brussels (except for trains) is €2.70, or €2.30 on board (contactless payment only).

As a student under the age of 25, you can get a cheaper yearly season ticket on your "Mobib" card (STIB card) by showing documents certifying your student status.

You can also top up your Mobib card with 75-trip, 10-trip or 5-trip bundles, which works out cheaper than buying single tickets.

You can check timetables before leaving by installing the [STIB](#) mobile app.

### Noctis bus

Don't want to miss the end of the movie? Want to stay out a while longer during the weekend? The STIB night network can grant all these wishes. There's a bus every 30 minutes on each Noctis line (night line) on Friday and Saturday nights from midnight to 3am.

### Metro

The metro system is good in Brussels with 70 stations across the city - recognisable by the white "M" on a blue background. The city is also known for displaying impressive artworks at many of its public transport stations.

Some tram lines are partly underground ("pre-metro" lines) and are accessed by metro stations identified with an "M". Access to these tram lines is not indicated from the outside.

### All public transport on one ticket

With lines crisscrossing the entire length and breadth of the city (and far beyond it), the bus, tram, metro and train lines are tried and tested ways of getting around in the whole Brussels area. With the unified ticketing system used in the city (a single public pricing system for the four public transport companies that operate in Brussels: STIB, TEC, De Lijn and SNCB), there's no need to buy several tickets: buy a BRUPASS ticket or a BRUPASS season ticket and enjoy the trip (€2.40 for a BRUPASS ticket)!

Good to know: Brussels has many small train stations (SNCB network) which allow you to get around very quickly, with a BRUPASS ticket or season ticket.

### Cycling

There are more and more cycle paths in Brussels. Scan the QR code or [click here](#) to find more info on cycling to ULB



### Car sharing

ULB has entered partnerships with several car sharing companies (including [Cambio](#) and Zipcar), or members of the university community to enjoy discounts.

### Brussels Mobility

#### Taxis

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. You should expect to pay €1.80 - €2.70 per kilometre, an initial charge 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](#) : +32 (0) 2349 49 49

[Taxi Bleu](#) : +32 (0) 2268 00 00

The STIB public transport company offers a [shared taxi service](#), "Collecto", between 11 pm and 6 am. 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, as they are shared taxis, but the ride only costs €6 (or €5 if you have a Mobib card). The shared taxi has to be booked in advance (by phone or through the online app) and when making the booking you need to mention the stop where you will be waiting for the taxi, your name and your destination address.





## HEALTHCARE AND INSURANCE

### Health insurance

In Belgium, individual health insurance is compulsory.

Students from the EU who have health insurance must bring proof of this insurance (the European health insurance card) to the Belgian health insurance company (known as a mutuality or “mutuelle” in French) of their choice. You can apply for this card from your health insurance organization in your country. EU citizens generally only have to pay a supplement.

Non-EU students must also be covered by health insurance valid in Belgium. In order to obtain your visa, you will be asked to provide proof of health insurance that covers at least the first three months of your stay in Belgium. This proof may be a Schengen-type private insurance policy (for example [Globe Partner](#) or [Expat & Co](#)) or proof of

future cover with a mutual insurance company in Belgium. For the latter, which costs around €12 per month, you can contact the International Welcome Desk ([welcome@ulb.be](mailto:welcome@ulb.be)).

### Mutuelle

You are free to choose whichever mutuelle you want. [Here is a list of mutuelles with offices in Brussels.](#)

Among these mutuelles, the national mutuelle CAAMI is free. However, paying for a mutuelle means you will receive better coverage.

When you register with a Belgian mutuelle, you benefit from the same conditions as a Belgian. You will be covered for medical/dental expenses, sick leave, maternity and paternity leave, physiotherapy etc.

### Public liability insurance

All ULB students benefit from public liability insurance covering any accidents related to their university activities.

### Medical services at ULB

[A medical service](#) (general practitioners, medical specialists, sports medicine, paramedical) is available to the university population at the rates set by INAMI (National Institute of Health and Disability Insurance), i.e. fully

reimbursed by the mutuelle.

Along with providing help in choosing a study programme, PsyCampus, our psychological counselling service, welcomes those who are finding it hard to adapt to university life, who are in search of personal well-being or need psychological support of any kind. PsyCampus is part of the [Service de Santé Mentale \(SSM\)](#), ULB's counselling service. The SSM has other facilities offering counselling: the «La Plaine» centre and the ULB Guidance Centre in Les Marolles.

[The Centre de consultations universitaire pluridisciplinaire \(CCUP\)](#) also offers on-campus counselling.

“[Aimer à l'ULB](#)”, a family planning centre, offers various medical, psychological and legal services. A multidisciplinary team is available to assist those who have emotional or sexual problems, in complete confidentiality.

### Repatriation insurance

Please note that the mutuelle 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 a private repatriation insurance in your home country. Should you do so, we advise you to read the small print carefully (particularly regarding the number of months you can spend abroad).

### Home insurance

It is generally stipulated in the rental contract that the tenant must take out liability insurance to cover against damage caused to the home and/or any equipment provided by the landlord. Basic home insurance covers damage caused by fire, water or natural disasters. Here's a list of home insurance policies: [Comparez 18 prix en assurance habitation en Belgique \(comparatif-assurance-habitation.be\)](#)

### Family insurance

“Family insurance” or “third-party liability insurance” covers damage you cause to other people or their property. If the policy includes personal legal protection, it will also defend your interests should you suffer any damage yourself. Here's a list of family insurance policies: [Comparez 18 prix en assurance habitation en Belgique \(comparatif-assurance-habitation.be\)](#)

## STUDENT LIFE

### Culture

**ULB-Culture** organises CinéClub film screenings, concerts and exhibitions. Their office is located on the Solbosch Campus, Building F1, Level 4.

Tel. +32 2 650 21 57.

More culture, more fun!

- [Brussels Tourist Office](#)
- [Fine Arts Museum](#)
- [Comic Strip Museum](#)
- [Royal Museums of Art and History](#)
- [Temporary exhibitions](#)

### ULB Sports

A wide range of sports activities are organised at ULB. The activities take place throughout the entire academic year on the various campuses of the University (Solbosch, Erasme, Charleroi) depending on the specific programmes.

An annual card (€50, or €30 for Erasmus students) will give you access to group sports classes and a discount on sports facilities.

Here is [the link to find all the information](#).

### Getting a job

From babysitting to tutoring and from secretarial work to IT, [the ULB Career Centre](#) is a central hub where students can find job vacancies to supplement their budget.

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 finance your entire stay, as there are statutory limitations on the number of hours students may work.

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

### Student associations

[ESN ULB Brussels](#) is one of 19 Belgian sections belonging to the international and European Erasmus Student Network. Their mission is to welcome, support and represent international exchange students at the Université libre de Bruxelles, offering them activities relating to the various causes supported by ESN, namely the environment, education, social inclusion, well-being, sport and culture.



## INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES

amount you pay for pre-school child-care on your tax return, as a certain proportion is tax-deductible.

### Local Belgian Schools

Demand for places at many schools exceeds supply, with some schools having long waiting lists, so it is advisable to enrol your child(ren) well in advance.

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.

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.

### Pre-primary school (*École maternelle*): from 2 years 6 months / 3 years to 6 years old

Free pre-primary education is provided for all children from the age of 2 years 6 months/3 years (depending on the school and the child's date of birth).

### Pre-school childcare

In Belgium, children often start going to a day-care centre (*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* and childminders (for children aged 3 months to 3 years) and *prégardiennats* (pre-school childcare facilities for children aged 18 months to 3 years) that are regularly monitored and approved by these organisations can be found on [the ONE website](#) and [the Kind en Gezin website](#).

As there is a shortage of pre-school childcare places, it is important to enrol your child well in advance. Demand is highest for subsidised pre-school childcare where the amount paid by parents depends on their income.

The ULB has *crèches* on the [Solbosch and Erasme campuses](#). Here too, places are limited and in high demand, so it is important to contact the *crèche* well in advance. Information (in French only) about the registration procedure can be found [here](#).

If you are paying income tax in Belgium, [you should declare the](#)

## Primary school (*École primaire*): from 6 to 12 years old

Children start primary school at the end of August - beginning of September of the year during which they turn 6. Primary school is compulsory and lasts for 6 years.

You can look for a French-speaking pre-primary or primary school [here](#), and for a Dutch-speaking school [here](#).

Information about schools with places available can be found [here](#) (French-speaking schools) and [here](#) (Dutch-speaking schools). As the information on these websites is not always up to date, it is advisable to call schools to check availability of places.

## Secondary school (*École secondaire*): from 12 to 18 years old

Children start secondary school at the end of August - beginning of September of the year during which they turn 12.

Secondary school is compulsory and lasts for 6 years. You can look for a French-speaking secondary school [here](#) and for a Dutch-speaking secondary school [here](#).

For further information on French-speaking local schools, see [here](#). For further information on Dutch-speaking local schools, see [here](#).

## 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 (in Wezembeek Oppem), a Lycée Français (in Uccle) and a Japanese School (in Auderghem). All these schools are fee-paying and more expensive than local schools. A list of international schools in and around Brussels can be found [here](#).

Brussels is also home to 4 European schools (Uccle & Berkendael, Woluwe-St-Lambert, Ixelles and Laeken), offering education in the languages of many 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. There is also a European School in Mol, near Antwerp. Information about the European School network can be found [here](#).

## 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 living with you and also a fixed amount on the occasion of the birth or adoption of a child.

Information about child benefit can be found [here](#).

## LEARNING FRENCH

### Parlez-vous français ?

As a French-speaking University, the main teaching language is French, although a growing number of Masters are taught fully or partly in English. You will thus study and live in a French-speaking environment.

Whether you are a beginner or looking to brush up your language skills, there are many opportunities to do so, on the campus or in Brussels.

### ULB langues

If you are willing to improve your level of French, ULB offers free language courses to foreign students all year long. Some classes are for exchange students only. Taking a test to determine your level is mandatory.

There are also some intensive classes organised over the summer.

[Get all the information](#)

### Classes in your neighbourhood

Information (in English) about French lessons organised for foreigners in each municipality of Brussels can be found on the



website [of the “Maison de la Francité”](#).

The website provides information about lessons subsidised by the local authorities and about private language schools.

### Good to know

[Eg](#) offers special rates and free courses for ULB students and researchers.

There are other language schools offering courses in a variety of languages at affordable prices.

You can check [their websites](#).

### What if you want to learn Dutch instead?

[More information about Dutch lessons in Brussels.](#)



## BANK ACCOUNT

For paying for your accommodation and daily expenses, we advise you to open an account at a bank of your choice, once you have arrived in Brussels. To do this, you can open an account online or simply go to any bank branch, taking with you:

- your passport or identity card (for EU citizens)
- proof of registration at the University
- rental contract
- proof that you have initiated registration with the commune (Annexe 15)

If you need to open a euro account euros quickly and do not yet have your Annexe 15 (registration with your municipality), you can open an account with a neobank (for example: Wise, Revolut, Nickel...).



## OTHER INFORMATION

### Libraries

Your ULB student card doubles as your library card. [More information about all ULB's libraries.](#)

### S&SAME

Are you lost on campus, having difficulty locating a university department, auditorium, computer room or any other useful service, or struggling to find the timetable of a course? In every library, S&SAME can help you.

The S&SAME teams are also at your disposal to explain how to connect to the Wi-Fi and access your email, MonULB or the Virtual University.

### Food on campus

There are several cafes and restaurants on the Solbosch campus (building F1). The cafeterias on the La Plaine and Erasmus campuses also offer a wide variety of affordable food options. There are also restaurants, cafes and supermarkets near the three campuses. Students in the Faculty of Medicine can use the hospital canteens during their internship at the hospital.

Good to know: a market selling local, organic, seasonal food takes place on the Solbosch campus



(avenue Paul Héger) every Tuesday, from 4 pm to 6.30 pm.

### Telephone and internet

You can either opt to purchase «pre-paid» cards or take out a subscription. This can be done at a store of your choice. There is a wide range of providers; you will be able to compare prices and offers online or once you are settled in Brussels.

On each campus you will find ULB's dedicated Wi-Fi network: Eduroam. To get access, all you need to do is follow [this procedure](#). Your first need to have your ULB email address.

## NEED HELP?

### Student Welfare Office (SWO)

Having trouble paying your tuition fees? Want to know more about funding your studies? Looking for a student job? The Student Welfare Office is there to welcome and support you throughout the year. Its staff will lend you an ear, tell you about your rights, and point you to the relevant departments.

The SWO can also provide administrative support for your procedures with other institutions (e.g. the Wallonia Brussels Federation, CPAS, family allowances, etc.). In addition, it can offer various forms of financial support: contribution to the cost of your course materials, reduced rent, reimbursement of public transport costs, etc.

The Student Welfare Office also gives transgender students the possibility to have their preferred name officially recognised at ULB. At any point during the academic year, they can simply visit the SWO's main office.

[ULB Student Welfare Office](#)



### Students with specific needs

ULB is committed to combating discrimination and welcomes students with specific needs or disabilities of all kinds. The curriculum remains the same for all, but depending on your needs, you are entitled to reasonable accommodations, specific types of aid and support.

Depending on your situation, you may be assigned one of the following statuses as a student with specific needs (SSN), to benefit from special measures for accessing higher education:

- Students with disabilities, learning difficulties or disabling diseases
- High-level athlete students
- Student entrepreneurs
- High-level artist students
- Pregnant students, parents-to-be or young parents

SSN status is granted by a Commission of Experts on the basis of a complete dossier. Thanks to this status, Faculties can make reasonable accommodations while maintaining the high standards that guarantee the value of the diplomas they award. Each faculty has SSN officers to guide and support students.

ULB offers a point of contact for these students with specific needs, to help and guide them in various ways: mediation with teachers, finding accommodation solutions, support for courses and exams, etc.

To find out more, go to:

[Support for students with specific needs](#)

[Centre d'Étude et de Formation pour l'Éducation Spécialisée et Inclusive](#)

### Cash<sup>e</sup>

[The Centre for assistance and support with student harassment issues \(Cash<sup>e</sup>\)](#) helps ULB students who feel they are victims of moral or sexual harassment, incivility, intimidation or psychological pressure, by offering them a listening ear and support.

### Emergencies and safety

If you experience or witness a medical emergency, an accident or an assault, or if you have found a suspicious object, please contact our Protection and Safety unit, open 24/7.

From any ULB landline, please dial one of the following numbers as soon as possible:

- 7 (on the Solbosch, La Plaine and Charleroi campuses)
- 22 (on the Erasme campus)
- 112 (on other campuses)

From a mobile phone:

- +32 2 650 26 14 or 112

Below you can find all the other relevant emergency numbers:

- Medical Emergencies (Fire and Ambulance): 100
- European number in case of violent crime and accidents: 112
- Federal Police (accidents without casualties): 101
- Red Cross: 105
- Anti-Poison Centre: 070 245 245
- Burn Victims Centre: 071 448 000



## LEAVING BRUSSELS AND BELGIUM

When you are leaving Belgium permanently, please notify your municipality of your departure. Should you receive a tax return form, send it back with a copy of your student card or enrolment certificate and a letter in which you declare you are a foreign student, stating your country of origin and the length of your stay at ULB. Also, make copies of all your documents for future reference if needed.

## Residence permit

You should return your residence permit to the municipality prior to departure; you will then receive a 'Model 8' form confirming that you have deregistered. The customs authorities may ask to see this document when you leave Belgium. If you do not return your residence permit prior to departure, you need to write to the municipality (enclosing a copy of your residence permit) and ask to be deregistered. Make sure that you inform the municipality of your new address and of your permanent address in your home country.

## Mutuality

Do not forget to terminate your affiliation to the mutuality with which you were registered.

## Bank account

If you wish to keep your bank account in Belgium provisionally open after your departure, contact your branch and ask for an email address at which you can contact them when you wish to close your account.

## Housing arrangements

Make sure that you give your landlord notice of your intention to leave your apartment well ahead

of time. In Belgium, notice must generally be given by registered letter 3 months before the expected departure date or the end of the rental contract.

It is essential to inform the landlord of your intention to leave the apartment even if you have a 1-year rental contract. If you do not do so, your contract will be automatically renewed. Schedule the exit inspection with your landlord and transfer water, gas and electricity contracts to the landlord's name or the new tenant's name.

Do not forget to cancel all TV, phone and internet contracts.



## ULB AS AN EXCHANGE STUDENT

### Registration as an exchange student

A stay as an exchange student at ULB can only take place on the basis of Inter-University Agreements between ULB and the partner universities. For more information, please consult your University's International Relations service.

Individual applications (from "free movers") are not accepted. Your application must go through your University.

To be considered eligible, your application must include, amongst other things, the proposed study programme or "learning agreement".

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

Before purchasing your airline ticket, please wait for the acceptance letter that ULB will send you in adequate time. It should arrive early enough for you to make all the arrangements that a long stay abroad requires.



### Academic Coordinators

The name and contact details 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. They will validate the curriculum that you will be following at ULB as an exchange student and answer any questions you may have on it.



### Welcome

Upon arrival at the University, you will receive your student card and the official certificates establishing your status as a ULB student. No registration fees 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 your registration at any time.

Some of our faculties offer a special welcome to exchange students. You will be informed of any such events by the faculty itself.

### Student grants

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

## USEFUL CONTACTS FOR EXCHANGE STUDENTS

### Faculties (if you are an exchange student)

Faculty of Letters, Translation and  
Communication  
Ms Valérie Van Steen  
Mobilite.LTC@ulb.be  
+32 2 650 36 87

ISTI-COOREMANS School of  
Translation and Interpretation  
Ms Nathalie Bremeels  
erasmus.TI.LTC@ulb.be  
+32 2 650 62 11

Faculty of Philosophy and Social  
Sciences  
Ms Isabelle Beauchamp  
pipsin@ulb.be  
+32 2 650 45 76

Faculty of Law and Criminology  
Ms Isabelle Bettens  
erasmus.droit@ulb.be  
+32 2 650 36 13

Solvay Brussels School of  
Economics and Management  
Ms Anne Georges  
Anne.Georges@ulb.be  
+32 2 650 48 66

Faculty of Sciences – Inter-faculty  
School of Bioengineering  
Mr Renaud Martel  
Renaud.Martel@ulb.be  
+32 2 650 55 53

Faculty of Psychology, Education  
Sciences and Speech and Language  
Therapy  
Ms Alexandra Debeur  
alexandra.debeur@ulb.be  
+32 2 650 60 54

Polytechnic School – Faculty of  
Applied Sciences  
Ms Rose-Marie Brynaert  
international.polytech@ulb.be  
+32 2 650 40 85

La Cambre Horta Faculty of  
Architecture  
Ms Zohra Chentouf  
international.archi@ulb.be  
+32 2 639 24 21

School of Public Health  
Ms Yasmina Talhaoui  
yasmine.talhaoui@ulb.be  
+32 2 555 40 13

Faculty of Medicine  
Ms Kristela Babic  
erasmus.medecine@ulb.be  
+32 2 555 61 64

Faculty of Pharmacy  
Ms Maureen Mbuyi-A-Nsaka  
mudoy.maureen.mbuyi-a-nsaka@  
ulb.be  
+32 2 650 53 37

Faculty of Motor Sciences  
Ms Anne Moncousin  
anne.moncousin@ulb.be  
+32 2 555 33 58



### International Welcome Desk

The ULB International Welcome Desk can help you with questions relating to visas and residence permits.

However, we are not in a position to speed up the application process with the Immigration Office or the town halls.

Regarding visas and residence permits, please refer to the website of the [Immigration Office | IBZ](#) and contact the Belgian Embassy in your country.

For any other questions, please contact us at [welcome@ulb.be](mailto:welcome@ulb.be)

## CAMPUS MAPS

For more information:  
[Maps and directions](#)



For any other questions,  
please contact us at  
[welcome@ulb.be](mailto:welcome@ulb.be)