International Welcome Desk
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EURAXESS at ULB

ULB is part of EURAXESS - Researchers in Motion, a unique pan-European initiative delivering information and support services to professional researchers: https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/. Backed by the European Union, member states and associated countries, it supports researcher mobility and career development, while enhancing scientific collaboration between Europe and the world.

In collaboration with its researchers, ULB has developed a human resources strategy for researchers (EURAXESS HRS4R). For further information about ULB initiatives within the framework of EURAXESS, see: www.ulb.be/euraxess

The International Welcome Desk serves as the EURAXESS Centre at ULB. All open research positions at ULB are advertised on EURAXESS Jobs: https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs.
Check list

**Before leaving your country**

- Secure funding
- Check whether you need a visa - see [Do I need a visa to come to Belgium?](#)
- Check whether you need a work permit, single permit or hosting agreement
- 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 and nationality but will generally include: passport, driving license, diplomas, birth/marriage certificates, medical file, proof of address in home country, proof of funding. Non-EEA citizens will need a police clearance certificate and medical certificate.
- If your diplomas and certificates are in any language other than French, Dutch or English, obtain certified and legalized translations.
- If you are coming to Belgium with family members, obtain legalised translations of birth and marriage certificates.
- If you are a citizen of an EEA country, request the European health insurance card - see [Health insurance](#) – which will cover you until you have registered for medical insurance in Belgium.
- If you are on regular medication, get at least one month’s supply (more if you are on very specific treatment) and obtain doctors’ reports.
- If your home address is not in your passport, obtain an official document from the local authorities confirming your home address (to facilitate opening of a bank account).
- Book temporary accommodation - see [Temporary housing](#).
- If you will be Visiting Researcher at ULB, you and your ULB supervisor need to complete the ‘Visiting Researcher’ application form and send it to the International Welcome Desk. This is essential in order for you to be insured on campus and have access to ULB libraries/online databases.

**On arrival**

- If you are paid by ULB, visit the [Human Resources Department](#) in order to finalize your contract or fellowship
- Look for long-term accommodation - see [Long term housing solutions](#)
- If you are Visiting Researcher, you and your ULB supervisor need to complete the ‘Visiting Researcher’ application form and send it to the International Welcome Desk, if you have not already done so. This is essential in order for you to be insured on campus and have access to ULB libraries/online databases.
- Register at the town hall - see [Residence permit](#).
- Register for [medical insurance](#).
- Open a bank account – see [Banking](#).
Your Status at the University

Your administrative status at ULB will depend on your career level, the reason for your stay and the origin of your funding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profile</th>
<th>Status at ULB</th>
<th>Department responsible for your file</th>
<th>ULB formalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PhD candidate enrolled solely at ULB or doing your thesis under joint supervision at ULB. Not funded by ULB</td>
<td>PhD candidate</td>
<td>Registration department (&amp; Research Department for joint supervision agreement)</td>
<td>Apply for admission to the ULB PhD programme: Complete joint supervision agreement, if applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EEA</strong> PhD candidate enrolled at ULB; scholarship or salary paid by ULB</td>
<td>PhD candidate &amp; scholarship-holder or employee</td>
<td>Registration department &amp; Human Resources department</td>
<td>Apply for admission to the ULB PhD programme: Contact the ULB Human Resources Department regarding your scholarship or work contract.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-EEA</strong> PhD candidate enrolled at ULB; scholarship or salary paid by ULB</td>
<td>PhD candidate &amp; scholarship-holder or employee</td>
<td>Registration department &amp; Human Resources department</td>
<td>Apply for admission to the ULB PhD programme: Contact the ULB Human Resources Department regarding your scholarship or work contract or, if you are a teaching and research assistant, regarding your work contract &amp; single permit (= combined work &amp; residence permit).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting PhD candidate, without joint supervision at ULB; stay of up to 90 days</td>
<td>Visiting researcher</td>
<td>International Welcome Desk</td>
<td>Complete visiting researcher application form:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EEA</strong> visiting PhD candidate, without joint supervision at ULB; stay of more than 90 days</td>
<td>Visiting researcher OR Visiting PhD candidate (if you wish to have student status at ULB)</td>
<td>International Welcome Desk OR Research Department &amp; Registration department</td>
<td>Complete visiting researcher application form OR apply for admission to the International Certificate in Doctoral Research Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-EEA</strong> visiting PhD candidate, without joint supervision at ULB; stay of more than 90 days in Belgium (and elsewhere in the Schengen zone)</td>
<td>Visiting PhD candidate</td>
<td>Research Department &amp; Registration department</td>
<td>Apply for admission to the International Certificate in Doctoral Research Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEA or non-EEA postdoctoral</td>
<td>Post-doctoral</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>Contact the ULB Human Resources Department regarding your fellowship or work contract. Contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Department &amp; International Welcome Desk</td>
<td>International Welcome Desk for information about your move to Belgium.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEA postdoctoral researcher or visiting professor; fellowship or salary not paid by ULB; stay of more than 90 days at ULB</td>
<td>Visiting researcher</td>
<td>International Welcome Desk</td>
<td>Complete visiting researcher application form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-EEA postdoctoral researcher or visiting professor; fellowship or salary not paid by ULB; stay of up to 90 days at ULB (and elsewhere in the Schengen zone)</td>
<td>Visiting researcher</td>
<td>Human Resources department &amp; International Welcome Desk</td>
<td>Complete visiting researcher application form. Contact the ULB Human Resources Department as soon as your stay at ULB is confirmed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-EEA postdoctoral researcher or visiting professor; fellowship or salary not paid by ULB; stay of more 90 days at ULB (and elsewhere in the Schengen zone)</td>
<td>Visiting researcher</td>
<td>International Welcome Desk &amp; Human Resources department</td>
<td>Contact the International Welcome Desk and/or the ULB Human Resources Department to enquire about immigration formalities as soon as your stay at ULB is confirmed. Immigration formalities can take several months.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**N.B.** Visiting researcher status at ULB does not enable non-EEA citizens to obtain a long stay visa or residence permit for Belgium.

\[1\] 28 European Union Countries, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway
Visa and entry requirements

Even if you have a valid visa or do not need a visa, you are not guaranteed automatic right of entry to the Schengen zone.

The border police may still ask you to show proof that you have sufficient financial resources, accommodation and medical insurance before allowing you to enter the Schengen zone.

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 the expected duration of your stay.

It is important to distinguish between short stays (up to 90 days) and long stays (more than 90 days).

Short stay – up to 90 days

Citizens of a country in the European Economic Area (EEA)
Citizens of countries in the European Economic Area (EEA) do not need a visa.

Citizens of a non-EEA country
Citizens of most non-EEA countries need a visa, but some are exempted from the visa requirement.

Long stay – more than 90 days

Citizens of a country in the European Economic Area (EEA)
Citizens of countries in the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland do not need a visa.
You need to register at the town hall after arrival in Belgium - see Residence permit.

Citizens of a non-EEA country
You need to obtain a long stay visa before travelling to Belgium.
You need to register at the town hall after arrival in Belgium - see Residence permit.

Where should I submit my visa application?

You need to apply for your visa at the Belgian consulate (or the visa agency appointed by the Belgian consulate) in, or responsible for, your home country or the country in which you are legally resident.

In some countries there is no Belgian consulate, and it will therefore be necessary to submit your visa application at the Belgian consulate in a neighbouring country or at the consulate of another country designated by the Belgian authorities.

Short stay visa – up to 90 days (in a period of 180 days)

If you intend to spend no more than 90 days (in a period of 180 days) in Belgium and elsewhere in the Schengen zone, you need to apply for a short-stay Schengen Visa C. If you plan to make regular short visits to ULB, you should apply for a multiple entry Schengen Visa C.

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1 28 European Union Countries, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway
If you plan to perform paid activities during your stay in Belgium, and/or will be teaching at ULB, please contact the ULB Human Resources Department or the International Welcome Desk, as you may need a work permit.

**Short stay visa – financial resources**

In order to be eligible for a short stay visa, you will need to prove that you have sufficient financial resources to cover your accommodation and living expenses during your stay in Belgium (95 € per day if you need to pay for accommodation, 45 € per day if accommodation is provided free of charge) and give sufficient guarantees that you will return to your home country.

Students and PhD candidates who apply for a short stay visa also need to prove that they have sufficient financial resources (ie. 95€ or 45€ per day).

**Short stay visa – visa charges**

Most applicants for a short stay visa need to pay a visa handling fee of 60 €.

Students, PhD candidates and postdoctoral researchers who are coming to Belgium for a study or research visit generally benefit from a fee waiver.

**Short stay visa – application procedure and required documents**

Detailed information about the short stay visa application procedure and required documents can be found on the website of the immigration office and on the website of the Belgian consulate at which you will be submitting your visa application. You will need to provide proof of medical/hospitalization/repatriation insurance.

**Short stay visa – family visits**

It can be difficult for family members of non-EEA citizens to obtain short stay visas to visit them in Belgium. The Belgian authorities will only accept letters of invitation and sponsorship documents (Annex 3bis) issued by people who have Belgian nationality or who have permanent residence in Belgium. Family members who apply for a short stay visa will need to provide proof of sufficient financial resources and proof of their intention to leave Belgium by the time their visa expires.

**Long stay visa – more than 90 days**

If your stay in Belgium (and other countries in the Schengen zone) will exceed 90 days, you need to apply for a long stay visa D. The type of visa D required will depend on your status at ULB.

*If you receive a scholarship or fellowship from ULB, a Belgian research institution, the Belgian state or an international organization, you are exempted from payment of the 180€ visa handling fee and the 204/358€ administrative fee (on condition that you submit a document issued by your funding institution confirming the fee waiver).*

Information about the administrative fee, and how this should be paid, can be found [here](#).

Your long stay visa does not have to be valid for the full duration of your stay in Belgium. On arrival in Belgium, you will need to apply for a residence permit on the basis of your long stay visa. Once you have your Belgian residence permit, the visa serves no purpose.

You should only apply for your Belgian residence permit once you have found long-term accommodation (even if you receive instructions from the Belgian consulate to register within 8 days of arrival).
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<th>Profile</th>
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<th>Documents to be enclosed with your visa application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PhD candidate doing your thesis solely at ULB or under joint supervision at ULB</td>
<td>PhD candidate</td>
<td>Apply for admission to the ULB PhD programme</td>
<td>PhD acceptance letter issued by the ULB Registration department. If you receive a scholarship from ULB, the Belgian state, a Belgian administration, a Belgian research institution or an international organization, documents confirming your scholarship and the visa fee waiver.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting PhD candidate, enrolled at another university outside Belgium; stay of more than 90 days at ULB</td>
<td>Visiting PhD candidate</td>
<td>Apply for admission to the International Certificate in Doctoral Research Training</td>
<td>Acceptance letter for the International Certificate in Doctoral Research Training issued by the Registration department. Proof of funding from your home country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher with ULB employment contract</td>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>Contact ULB Human Resources Department</td>
<td>Work contract &amp; hosting agreement (Convention d’accueil)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher with an employment contract from another Belgian institution</td>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>Contact your employer’s Human Resources Department</td>
<td>Work contract. Other documents to be determined on the basis of your specific situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of ULB academic staff with ULB employment contract Salary paid by ULB</td>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>Contact ULB Human Resources Department</td>
<td>Appointment letter issued by ULB Human Resources Department and single permit (= combined work &amp; residence permit).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postdoctoral researcher with a ULB fellowship</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>Contact ULB Human Resources Department</td>
<td>Fellowship award letter (attestation de bourse), hosting agreement (convention d’accueil) and visa fee waiver document issued by ULB Human Resources Department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postdoctoral researcher with a fellowship from another Belgian institution</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>Contact your funding institution’s HR department</td>
<td>Fellowship award letter (attestation de bourse), hosting agreement (convention d’accueil) and visa fee waiver document issued by the HR department of your funding institution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting Professor/Visiting Post-Doctoral Researcher; salary/fellowship not paid by ULB or another Belgian institution</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
<td>Contact the ULB Human Resources Department or the International Welcome Desk at least 4 months before your intended date of arrival in Belgium</td>
<td>To be determined on the basis of your specific situation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Long stay visa – financial resources**

In order to be eligible for a long stay visa, you need to prove that you have **sufficient regular financial resources** to cover accommodation and living expenses during your stay in Belgium. The minimum financial resources required will depend on the type of visa you are applying for, starting at 666 € per month for a student visa. **Please note that financial resources of 666 € per month will enable you to obtain a student visa, but will not cover your accommodation and living expenses in Belgium.**

Always enclose proof of financial resources (eg. fellowship, scholarship, salary etc.) with your visa application.

Students/PhD candidates who do not have a scholarship can apply for a visa on the basis of sponsorship by a relative or another person in Belgium or their home country. The sponsor has to complete an Annex 32 document that certifies that they will cover all expenses during the student/PhD candidate’s studies in Belgium, and prove (eg. via salary statements, work contract) that they have sufficient regular income.

For further information, see this document.

The Belgian consulate at which you apply for your visa will verify whether your sponsor meets the solvency requirements.

**Long stay visa – visa charges**

Applicants for a long stay visa generally need to pay a visa handling fee of 180€ and an administrative fee of 204€ (students and PhD candidates) or 358€ (postdoctoral researchers and employees):

Information about the administrative fee, and how this should be paid, can be found here.

Certain categories do, however, benefit from a fee waiver.

Exemption from payment of the long stay visa handling fee (180 €):

- All Erasmus Mundus students
- Students, PhD candidates and postdoctoral researchers who receive a scholarship or fellowship from ULB, the Belgian state, a Belgian administration, a Belgian research institution or an international organization.

Exemption from payment of the long stay visa administrative fee (204 or 358 €), on submission of a statement issued by the funding institution confirming the fee waiver:

- Erasmus Mundus **scholarship holders**
- Students, PhD candidates and postdoctoral researchers who receive a scholarship or fellowship from ULB, a Belgian research institution, the Belgian state or an international organization.

If you are not sure whether you are exempted from payment of the visa handling fee and/or the administrative fee, or if the consulate asks you to pay the fees when you think you should be exempted, please contact the International Welcome Desk before making any payments.

**Long Stay Visa - documents to be submitted**

Visa application forms and the list of documents to be submitted are available for students and PhD candidates and for postdoctoral researchers and employees, and on the website of the Belgian consulate or visa agency at which your visa application will be submitted.
Information about family reunion visas can be found on the website of the Belgian consulate or visa agency at which the visa applications will be submitted and on the immigration office website.

Family members should apply for their visas at the same time as the person joining ULB (even if the consulate or visa agency advises you to the contrary). If they do not do so, you risk being separated from your family for several months. In the event of any problems, please contact the International Welcome Desk immediately. As proof of accommodation is required for family reunion visa applications, the International Welcome Desk can issue a document confirming that the university will assist with finding accommodation as soon as the visa have been issued. Once you have submitted your visa application, it can take between 2 weeks and 2 months for your application to be processed and your visa issued. The visa application can be submitted up to 3 months before your expected travel date.

We strongly advise you submit your visa application as early as possible, especially if you are applying for a long-stay visa and your family will be accompanying you to Belgium. Do not book your flight to Belgium before your visa has been issued.

It is possible for non-EEA PhD candidates, researchers and employees (and their families) who do not need a short-stay visa in order to enter Belgium (eg. non-EEA citizens who have a valid residence permit for another country in the Schengen zone, citizens of Japan, Brazil, USA,) to dispense with applying for a long stay visa and register directly at the town hall in Belgium on arrival (by providing all the documents they would have needed to provide when applying for a long-stay visa). This procedure is not recommended, however, as it will take considerably longer for you to obtain a Belgian residence permit (3-6 months or more) and you may be unable to travel abroad. Moreover, non-EEA family members who arrive in Belgium without a long stay visa will obtain a temporary residence permit (carte orange) in the first instance, will only be able to apply for a standard residence permit after 6 months and may be unable to travel abroad.

You can check the status of your visa application on the immigration office website.

References - Legislation

Precise visa legislation can be found on the immigration office website.
**Work permit & Single permit**

**Do I need a work permit or a single permit?**

**EEA citizens**

No work permit is required.

**Non-EEA citizens**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profile</th>
<th>Work permit/Single permit requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PhD candidate enrolled at ULB; scholarship or self-funded</td>
<td>No work permit/single permit required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD candidate enrolled at ULB; ULB work contract &amp; salary</td>
<td>Single permit (= combined work and residence permit). Contact the ULB <a href="#">Human Resources</a> department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-funded PhD candidate enrolled at ULB who would like to do a student job</td>
<td>You are allowed to work for up to 20h per week during the academic year on condition that you obtain a “titre unique” from the town hall of your municipality of residence. <strong>The job should be compatible with your PhD.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting PhD candidate; enrolled at another University; <strong>stay of less than 90 days in Belgium</strong></td>
<td>You do not qualify for a work permit and are not allowed to do paid work in Belgium.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting PhD candidate; enrolled for International Certificate in Doctoral research training at ULB; <strong>stay of more than 90 days in Belgium</strong></td>
<td>You may work for up to 20h per week during the academic year on condition that you obtain a “titre unique” from the town hall of your municipality of residence. <strong>The job should be compatible with your PhD.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Doctoral researcher; fellowship paid by ULB</td>
<td>No work permit/single permit required. Hosting agreement <em>(Convention d’accueil)</em> issued by the ULB <a href="#">Human Resources</a> Department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Doctoral Researcher with ULB work contract; salary paid by ULB</td>
<td>No work permit/single permit required. Hosting agreement <em>(Convention d’accueil)</em> issued by ULB. Contact the ULB <a href="#">Human Resources</a> department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting Post-Doctoral researcher; fellowship/salary not paid by ULB</td>
<td>Will depend on amount/type of funding and your specific situation. Contact the ULB <a href="#">Human Resources</a> department or the <a href="#">International Welcome Desk</a> at least 4 months before your intended date of arrival in Belgium.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting Professor; salary paid by home institution; <strong>stay of less than 90 days in Belgium</strong></td>
<td>Work permit. Contact the ULB <a href="#">Human Resources</a> department or the <a href="#">International Welcome Desk</a> at least 4 months before your intended date of arrival in Belgium.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Single permit

In January 2019, Belgium transposed the EU Single Permit Directive (2011/98), which involves one single application procedure for non-EEA nationals to work and reside in an EU member state for more than 90 days.

The application for the single permit must be submitted by the employer to both the employment ministry of the Region in which the person will be working and the Belgian immigration office. The employment ministry first verifies that the single permit application is complete (this takes a maximum of 15 working days). The application for the non-EEA national to work and reside in Belgium is then processed by the employment ministry and the immigration office respectively (maximum 4 months’ processing time).

If both authorities give their go-ahead, the single permit application is approved and the employee receives an Annex 46 document by email. A copy of the Annex 46 is also sent to the Belgian consulate at which the employee will be applying for their visa.

The Belgian consulate should issue the employee’s visa and the visas of any family members within 5-10 days.

On arrival in Belgium, the employee needs to register at the foreigners’ desk at the town hall of their municipality of residence and request the single permit. The town hall issues an Annexe 49 document authorizing the employee to work in Belgium pending receipt of the single permit.

The ULB human resources department needs to apply for a single permit for the following categories of staff who are non-EEA citizens:

- academic staff
- administrative and technical staff
- visiting professors (stay of over 90 days)
- teaching assistants
- visiting postdoctoral researchers who receive a salary from their home institution.

The single permit can be valid for up to 3 years, depending on the duration of the work contract.
Do I need to register at the town hall and apply for a residence permit?

Short stay – less than 90 days

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

EEA 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 do a déclaration de présence, valid for the duration of your stay (90 days maximum). In practice, this formality is rarely complied with by EEA citizens and non-compliance is rarely sanctioned.

Non-EEA citizens

If you are not staying in a hotel, you should 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 90 days).

Long stay – more than 90 days

If your stay in Belgium will exceed 90 days, you need to register at the town hall of your municipality of residence and apply for a residence permit.

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

For non-EEA citizens, the residence permit replaces the entry visa and enables you to travel around the Schengen zone and re-enter it (for example, if you go home for the holidays).

For how long is the residence permit valid?

EEA citizens:

You will receive a 5-year residence permit.

Non-EEA students and PhD candidates:

Your residence permit will be valid until 31 October following the academic year during which you have been studying (providing you have funding until then), and has to be renewed annually. For example, if your residence permit is issued during the 2019-20 academic year, it will be valid until 31 October 2020 (providing you have funding for the full academic year).

Non-EEA postdoctoral researchers and employees:

The validity of your residence permit will depend on your status and the duration of your funding. In many cases it will have to be renewed each year.

How do I obtain a residence permit?

In theory, you need to register at the Foreigners’ Desk (bureau des étrangers) of your local town hall (maison communale) within 8 days of your arrival in Belgium. In practice, however, you only need to
register once you have found long-term accommodation. The registration procedure, and the time this takes, varies from one municipality to another. At some, you need to queue in person very early in the morning, at others you need to call in advance to make an appointment, send an email or request an appointment via the town hall’s website. Please ensure that you put your name on your letterbox and/or doorbell. Within two-three weeks of initiation of the town hall registration procedure, a police officer will stop by to check that you do actually live at the address you have given.

Two-three weeks after the police officer’s visit, you will receive an appointment to complete the registration procedure at the town hall and order your residence permit, plus 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 for the residence permit (25€-50€ depending on the municipality).

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

The documents generally requested are:

- Valid identity card or passport (with visa, if applicable); your passport should ideally be valid for the full duration of your stay in Belgium
- Four ID photos (on white background)
- Proof of accommodation (eg. signed rental contract).
- Proof of enrolment at ULB (students and PhD candidates), confirmation of research fellowship (postdoctoral researchers) or letter of appointment (postdoctoral researchers with work contract and academic staff).
- Proof of financial resources.

If your family moves with you to Belgium, the following additional documents will be requested:

- Valid identity card or passport (with visa, if applicable) for all family members
- Four ID photos per family member
- Birth certificates for all family members and marriage certificate (plus certified translations, if applicable).

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 have to be legalised by the Foreign Affairs ministry and then by the Belgian consulate in your country of origin. In other cases, you will need to obtain an apostille. In addition, certificates in any language other than French or Dutch must be accompanied by a certified translation.

Please contact the Belgian consulate in your country of origin or residence to check legalisation and translation requirements **before travelling to Belgium**. It may be substantially more expensive to get the documents translated in Belgium than in your country of origin. **Should you not have the required legalisations and certified translations, the town hall registration procedure will be considerably delayed.**

Further information about legalisation of official documents can be found [here](#).

At your first visit to the town hall, you should request an “Annexe 15” document (proof that you have initiated the registration procedure), as the bank may require this in order to open your account.
**How do I initiate registration at the town hall?**

**Anderlecht**
Rue Georges Moreau 1A, 1070 Brussels
Go in person to the Foreigners’ desk at the town hall.
Opening hours: Monday-Friday 8.00-8.30.
[Website](#)

**Auderghem**
Rue E. Idiers 12, 1160 Brussels
Call to make an appointment: 02/676 48 16.
[Website](#)

**Berchem-Sainte-Agathe**
Avenue du Roi Albert 33, 1082 Brussels
Go in person to the Foreigners’ desk at the town hall.
Opening hours: Monday- Wednesday 9.00-14.00; Thursday: 9.00-14.00 & 16.00-19.00; Friday 8.00-13.00.
[Website](#)

**Bruxelles**
Bureau de liaison ‘Louise’, Avenue Louise 240, 1000 Brussels
Centre administratif, Boulevard Anspach, 1000 Brussels
Non-EEA citizens: contact the [International Welcome Desk](#) to initiate the procedure.
EEA citizens: make an appointment via [this website](#).
[Website](#)

**Etterbeek**
Avenue d’Auderghem 113, level -1, 1040 Brussels
Make an appointment to initiate the registration procedure via [the website](#)

**Evere**
Square Hoedemaekers, 10, 1140 Brussels
Go in person to the Foreigners’ desk at the town hall.
Opening hours: Monday-Wednesday 8.00-12.00.
[Website](#)

**Forest**
Rue de Liège 1, 1190 Brussels
Go in person to the Foreigners’ desk at the town hall.
Opening hours: Monday-Friday 8.30-9.30. It is advisable to arrive well before the opening time.
[Website](#)
**Ganshoren**

Avenue Charles Quint, 140, 1083 Brussels  
Go in person to the Foreigners’ desk at the town hall.  
Opening hours: Monday & Tuesday 8.30-11.00, Wednesday 8.30-11.00 & 13.30-14.15, Thursday 8.30-11.00, Friday 8.30-12.00.  
Website

**Ixelles**

Chaussée d’Ixelles 124, 1050 Brussels  
Contact the International Welcome Desk to initiate the procedure.  
Website

**Jette**

Chaussée de Wemmel, 100, 1090 Brussels  
Go in person to the Foreigners’ desk at the town hall.  
Opening hours: Monday-Wednesday & Friday 8.30-14.00, Thursday 13.00-19.00.  
Website

**Koekelberg**

Place H. Vanhuffel 6, 1081 Brussels  
Call to make an appointment: 02/600 15 92.  
Opening hours: Monday-Friday 8.00-12.00.  
Website

**Molenbeek-St-Jean**

Rue du Niveau 7, 1er étage, 1080 Brussels  
Go in person to the Foreigners’ desk at the town hall.  
Opening hours: Monday-Friday 8.00-12.00. It is essential to get there very early (even 2 hours before the opening time) as only a limited number of tickets are handed out.  
Website

**Saint-Gilles**

Place M. van Meenen 39, 1060 Brussels  
EEA citizens: call to make an appointment: 02/536.02.38 or make an appointment via the following form.  
Non-EEA citizens: go in person to the Foreigners’ desk at 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.  
Website

**Saint-Josse-ten-Noode**

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

**Schaerbeek**

Place Colignon 2, 1030 Brussels
Go in person to the Foreigners’ desk at the town hall.
Opening hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 8.00-13.00; Thursday 8.00-19.00.
Website

**Uccle**

rue Auguste Danse 3 (1st floor), 1180 Brussels
Go in person to the Foreigner’s desk at the town hall.
Opening hours: Monday-Friday 8.30-15.00.
Website

**Watermael-Boitsfort**

Place A. Gilson 1, 1170 Brussels
Go in person to the Foreigners’ desk at the town hall (desk 2).
Opening hours: Monday, Tuesday, Friday 8.00-12.00, Wednesday & Thursday 08.00-12.00 & 14.00-17.00.
Website

**Woluwe St Lambert**

Avenue Paul Hymans 2, 1200 Brussels
Make an appointment via this link
Opening hours: Monday & Friday 8.00-13.00, Tuesday & Thursday 8.00-18.30, Wednesday 8.00-15.00.
Website

**Woluwe St Pierre**

Avenue Charles Thielemans, 93 1150
Go in person to the Foreigners’ desk at the town hall (desk 1).
Opening hours: Monday, Tuesday, Friday 8.30-13.00; Wednesday 14.00-16.00; Thursday 16.00-19.00.
Website

**Charleroi**

Maison Communale Annexe
Avenue E. Mascaux 100, 6001 Marcinelle
Opening hours: Monday-Friday 8.00-12.00.
Go in person to the Foreigners’ desk at the town hall as from 7.30 in order to receive a ticket enabling you to initiate the registration procedure.
Website
Residence permit renewal (non-EEA students and PhD candidates)

It is advisable to start the residence permit renewal procedure at least 45 days before your permit is due to expire.

If you remain in the same administrative situation (ie. same address, same source of funding), the town hall can process your renewal application directly. If there is any change in your administrative situation (eg. different address, different source of funding), your renewal application has to be sent to the immigration office where processing can take several weeks, or even months.

We advise you not to plan any trips outside Belgium until you have received your new residence permit. Should you need to travel urgently for any reason, please contact the International Welcome Desk.

Non-EEA students and PhD candidates need to provide:
- proof of re-enrolment at ULB
- proof of funding for the next academic year
- proof of medical insurance (eg. statement issued by a Belgian mutuality)
- the formulaire standard downloadable in MonULB for the previous academic year - MonULB > My certificates & provisional student card > 20XX-XX Certificate for resident permit renewal
- Four ID photos on white background, different from those provided the previous year
- 25€-50€, depending on the municipality.

If the renewal procedure is started 15 days or less before your residence permit is due to expire, you will need to pay an additional administrative charge of 204€ and the renewal procedure will take considerably longer.

PhD candidates should ensure that the meeting of their supervisory committee takes place at least 6 weeks before their residence permit is due to expire, in such a way that they can finalize their re-enrolment at ULB and start the residence permit renewal procedure in time.

Residence permit renewal (postdoctoral researchers)

It is advisable to start the residence permit renewal procedure at least 45 days before your permit is due to expire.

Your renewal application has to be sent to the immigration office, where processing can take several weeks or even months.

We advise you not to plan any trips outside Belgium until you have received your new residence permit. Should you need to travel urgently for any reason, please contact the International Welcome Desk.

Non-EEA postdoctoral researchers need to provide:
- fellowship award letter or work contract
- hosting agreement (convention d’accueil)
- proof of medical insurance (eg. registration with a Belgian mutuality)
- Four ID photos on white background, different from those provided the previous year
- 25€-50€, depending on the municipality.
Single permit renewal (members of ULB academic or administrative staff)

Non-EEA employees who are members of ULB academic or administrative staff will need a new single permit. The ULB HR department will contact you regarding the renewal procedure 4 months before your current single permit expires.

Extending your stay in Belgium at the end of your PhD or your research

EU Directive 2016/801 states that on completion of their studies or research, graduates and researchers should be able to renew their residence permit for a minimum of 9 months in order to remain in Belgium and look for a job.

However, as the Directive has not yet been transposed in Belgium, this possibility does not yet exist.
Accommodation

Information about short and long-term accommodation can be found on the web-pages of the ULB accommodation office. Brussels offers a large choice of accommodation in terms of comfort level, price and distance from the University campuses.

**Short-term accommodation**

Short-term accommodation options in Brussels include aparthotels, hotels, bed and breakfasts and youth hostels – and also rooms in private houses, studios and apartments via Airbnb and Brussels Destination. The ULB accommodation office ([office.du.logement@ulb.be](mailto:office.du.logement@ulb.be)) can assist with making reservations with Brussels Destination.

There are a small number of temporary rooms at the Héger residence on the ULB Solbosch campus (for stays of a few days to a couple of weeks, while looking for long-term accommodation). It is advisable to check availability with the ULB accommodation office as soon as you know your approximate date of arrival ([office.du.logement@ulb.be](mailto:office.du.logement@ulb.be)).

**Aparthotels**

Aparthotels offer furnished and fully equipped studios and apartments, sometimes with a limited cleaning service. Prices vary, depending on comfort level and location, and generally decrease for longer stays.

**Aparthotels in the vicinity of the ULB Solbosch and La Plaine campuses**

**U-RESIDENCE**

Boulevard Général Jacques 271, 1050 Brussels
[Website](#)

**AXL FLATHOTEL**

Rue de la Croix 45, 1050 Brussels
[Website](#)

**APARTHOTEL WELLINGTON**

154 Chaussée de Vleurgat, 1000 Brussels
[Website](#)

**IMMOBE APARTHOTELS**

Immobe have several aparthotels and furnished apartments in Brussels; “Louise”, “Souveraine”, “Vallée” & “Livourne” are closest to ULB.
[Website](#)
FLAT RESIDENCE BRUGMANN
Avenue Brugmann 40, 1190 Bruxelles
Website

BRUSSELS BUSINESS FLATS – BBF
BBF have furnished apartments and studios throughout Brussels.
Website

FLATOTEL
32 Boulevard de la Cambre, 1000 Brussels
Website

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.

Check the ULB accommodation office website or contact the accommodation office at office.du.logement@ulb.be for information about hotels with which ULB has negotiated preferential rates.

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 Bed & Brussels, 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 “next to ULB” as one of your search criteria on the website.

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

AUBERGE DES 3 FONTAINES
Chaussée de Wavre 2057, 1160 Brussels
Website
This is the closest youth hostel to the ULB Solbosch and La Plaine campuses.

BRUEGEL YOUTH HOSTEL
Rue du Saint-Esprit, 2, 1000 Brussels
Website
Central location, Metro Gare Centrale.
**GENERATION EUROPE YOUTH HOSTEL**

Rue de l’Eléphant 4, 1080 Brussels  
Website  
West of the city centre, Metro Comte de Flandre.

**JACQUES BREL YOUTH HOSTEL**

Rue de la sablonnière 30, 1000 Brussels  
Website  
Central location, Metro Madou.

**SLEEP WELL YOUTH HOSTEL**

Rue du Damier 23, 1000 Brussels  
Website  
Central location, Metro Rogier.

**VINCENT VAN GOGH CENTRE**

Rue Traversière, 8, 1210 Saint-Josse-ten-Noode  
Website  
Central location, Metro Botanique.

**Couch-surfing**

If you are on a really tight budget, you could try 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.

You can only look for a couch-surf once you have registered on the website.

**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 ULB accommodation office will be able to guide you in your search:  
office.du.logement@ulb.be  
Tel. +32 (0)2/650 21 73 & +32 (0)2/650 22 59

Rather than making long-term accommodation arrangements in advance, we recommend that you reserve short-term accommodation for when you first arrive in Belgium and then choose your long-term accommodation after a week or two of intensive house/apartment hunting.

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 take them into consideration when calculating the total monthly cost.
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 municipalities closest to the ULB Solbosch and la Plaine campuses are:
- Ixelles (postcode 1050)
- Etterbeek (postcode 1040)
- Saint Gilles (postcode 1060)
- Bruxelles-Ville (postcode 1000)
- Auderghem (postcode 1160)
- Watermael-Boitsfort (postcode 1170).

The ULB Erasme campus is located in Anderlecht (postcode 1070).

If you want to check how conveniently located an address is for the campus on which you will be working or studying, the public transport website 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 ULB Accommodation Office or the International Welcome Desk will be able to advise you.

Always 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 colleague to check it out before you sign a rental contract or make any payments.

### A few tips….

Never send money via Western Union, Moneygram or by post.

Never make any payments before you have visited the property (or a friend has visited it for you) and you have signed a rental contract.

Never pay anything in order to visit a property. 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!

Do be careful, as there are scams on all accommodation websites. If you have any doubts about a property, please contact the International Welcome Desk.

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### Average Prices for different types of Rental Property

<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; Utilities²</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 and shared kitchen. There are a limited number of rooms in ULB halls of residence, mostly reserved</td>
<td>12-15 m²</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>350-500€ &amp; 0 or 50-100€ charges</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² Prices indicated are for Ixelles, Etterbeek, 1000 Brussels. You may find cheaper options if you live in other municipalities.
for Bachelor students.
There are also many privately owned furnished student rooms (known as ‘kots’) and several privately owned student residences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accommodation Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Available</th>
<th>Rent Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Studio</td>
<td>Independent accommodation, with bed/lounge/kitchen in one room, plus private bathroom.</td>
<td>20-40 m²</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>500-650€ &amp; 50-150€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>450-600€ &amp; 50-150€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 bedroom apartment</td>
<td>Apartment with a separate bedroom</td>
<td>50-70 m²</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>650-800€ &amp; 50-150€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>600-800€ &amp; 50-150€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared accommodation</td>
<td>House or apartment shared with other tenants 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>400-550€ &amp; 50-150€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bedrooms 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€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>750-1200€ &amp; 100-150€</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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1500-2500€</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Useful accommodation websites**

- **ULB Accommodation Office**
  - [office.du.logement@ulb.be](mailto:office.du.logement@ulb.be)
  - Privately owned rooms, studios, apartments and shared apartments in Brussels rented through the University (in French)

- **Appartager**
  - Shared accommodation.

- **Immoweb**
  - Furnished and unfurnished studios, apartments and houses. (Use ‘Refined search’ if you wish to find furnished accommodation.)

- **Immovlan**
  - Furnished and unfurnished studios, apartments and houses.

- **Brussels Destination**
  - Furnished studios and apartments. Both short and long term rental contracts.
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 that cannot be broken without payment of compensation.

Short-term rental contracts can often be negotiated for furnished accommodation. Before signing the contract, make sure you clarify the notice period and compensation to be paid 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 through your bank) and arrange the 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 in Belgium, 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.

There is a more flexible rental contract for student accommodation (involving a notice period of 2 months and no compensation in the event of early termination) and we recommend that students use this.

Utilities

Gas and Electricity

There are several energy providers in Belgium (of which Engie 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.

To compare the energy prices of the various suppliers in your neighbourhood, see here.
When you move into your home (and when you leave), you need to indicate the meter numbers, meter readings and date on which the meters were read on a form, 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 the Brussels Region: [Vivaqua](#).

In the event of emergencies, they can be contacted on 02/518 88 97.

When you move into your home (and when you leave), you need to indicate the meter number, meter reading and date on which the meter was read on a form, then send the form to the water company. The form can be found [here](#).

**Home insurance**

It is generally stipulated in the rental contract that tenants must take out tenant liability insurance (to cover them against damage caused to the home and to any furniture/equipment provided by the landlord) plus insurance of their 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

How you register for 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 maternity leave and long term sick 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. The insurance premium will depend on your level of income. 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
- Partena
- Mutualité socialiste
- Mutualité chrétienne
- Mutualité libérale
- Caisse Auxiliaire d’Assurance Maladie-Invalidité

ULB has a privileged partnership with the Partena, which has an English-speaking customer service centre and can provide registration forms and documentation in English. Partena has a dedicated Expats agency at 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.

Depending on your situation, you will need to provide:

- Completed application form.
- Copy of passport(s).
- A document confirming that you pay social security contributions in Belgium (for PhD candidates, researchers, members of academic and administrative staff paid by ULB or another Belgian institution).
- Proof of income and of connection with ULB (for visiting professors and researchers funded by an institution in their home country).
- Proof of registration at ULB (for students).
- Family composition document (‘composition de ménage’) provided by the town hall after completion of the registration procedure, if you have dependents.

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 medical insurance to cover their initial months in Belgium. Please contact the International Welcome Desk for further information.

Students and PhD candidates whose financial resources amount to less than 19,000€ net per year, can apply to register with the mutuality with ‘BIM’ status after they have completed the town hall registration procedure and obtained a family composition document. ‘BIM’ status entitles them to a higher rate of reimbursement and a cheap public transport pass.

**How much does health insurance cost?**

If you are paid by ULB or another Belgian institution, the social security contributions that you pay and that your employer pays for you entitle you to basic health insurance through a Belgian mutuality. 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.

It is mandatory to subscribe to the mutuality’s ‘complementary’ insurance (costing +/- 11€ per month), except if you register with the mutuality CAAMI, which does not offer this. While the basic insurance provided by all mutualities is the same, the content of the complementary 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 country in the European Union, Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, North Macedonia and Australia. If you are a Non-EU citizen, you should check with the mutuality which countries you are covered in by the EHIC card.

**How much does an appointment cost?**

The cost of your appointment will depend on whether or not the healthcare provider (doctor, dentist, physiotherapist...) has signed a tariff convention with the mutualities (ie. on whether he/she is ‘conventionné’ or ‘non-conventionné’).

If you go to a healthcare provider who has signed the tariff convention (ie. who is ‘conventionné’), the mutuality will generally reimburse 70-75% of the fee. Healthcare providers who have not signed the tariff convention (ie. who are ‘non-conventionné’) generally charge higher fees, but the mutuality will only reimburse 70-75% 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 you check whether the healthcare provider has signed the tariff convention before making an appointment. You can also look for a healthcare provider who has signed the tariff convention and check whether a specific healthcare provider has signed the tariff convention via this website (indicate ‘conventionné’ in ‘statut de conventionnement’).

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 expenses, sick leave, maternity and paternity leave, physiotherapy…. You will generally need to pay healthcare providers at the time of your appointment and then request reimbursement from your mutuality.

➢ In some cases, you will receive a receipt (called ‘Attestation de soins donnés’), on which you need to put your personal sticker before sending it to the mutuality for reimbursement.

Part of the fee will be reimbursed by the mutuality – and part you will need to cover yourself (the ‘ticket modérateur’).

➢ Some healthcare providers now use electronic receipts (e-Attest), and inform your mutuality via an online platform about your consultation and how much you have paid. The mutuality then reimburses you directly, without your needing to send in a receipt.

Most healthcare providers should be switching to the e-Attest system in the near future.

Optional additional insurances

The mutuality covers general medical expenses (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 most of the the cost of a 2 or 4 bedded room, but you will need to pay a supplement if you want a private 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 or your mutuality for further information.

Members of ULB academic, research and administrative staff with a work contract can subscribe to the ULB hospitalisation insurance at no cost. Your contact person in the ULB HR department will be able to provide you with further information. Family members can also be registered for a small monthly fee.
Postdoctoral researchers and PhD candidates with a ULB fellowship or scholarship (and their family members) can subscribe to the ULB hospitalization insurance for a small fee.

**Doctor/dentist appointments, hospitalization**

In Belgium you are free to choose your own doctors, 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.

In the event of hospitalization, and providing you are registered with a mutuality, you will only receive an invoice for the part of the bill not covered by the mutuality. The mutuality will pay their part 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 (private, 2 or 4 bedded room) – and will be substantially higher if you opt for a private room. Hospitalization insurance (via your mutuality, a private insurance company or ULB) is therefore highly recommended if your preference is for a private room. If you do not have additional hospitalization insurance, we advise against taking a private room (as your personal contribution could reach hundreds or thousands of euros).**

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

ULB has an extensive hospital network in Brussels:
- Hôpital académique Erasme
- Institut Jules Bordet
- Centre Hospitalier Universitaire Brugmann
- Hôpital Universitaire des enfants Reine Fabiola (HUDERF)
- Centre Hospitalier Universitaire Saint-Pierre
- Hôpitaux Iris Sud (Etterbeek-Ixelles, Joseph Bracops, Molière Longchamp et Etterbeek-Baron Lambert)
- Polyclinique du Lothier

and in Wallonia:
- Polyclinique de Nivelles (in Nivelles)
- Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Tivoli (in La Louvière)
- Hôpital Marie Curie (Charleroi)
- CHIREC (in Braine l’Alleud)
- Centre Hospitalier EpiCURA (in Ath)
- Centre Hospitalier de Wallonie Picarde (Tournai)
- Centre Hospitalier Regional de la Haute Senne (in Soignies).

**Medication**

If your doctor has prescribed medication for you, the mutuality will generally cover part of the cost. If you present your Belgian residence permit 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 normal working hours (‘pharmacie de garde’), see here. If you purchase medicine outside normal working hours, the pharmacy may charge a supplement.

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

**Repatriation insurance**

The Belgian mutuality will cover most of your 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 travel and 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.
Tax and social security

**Income tax**

A [tax return](#) must be completed by anyone living in Belgium on 1 January of the relevant tax year.

For further information, see [here](#).

It is now mandatory to indicate on page 4 of the tax form whether you have any bank accounts outside Belgium.

If you do have bank accounts outside Belgium, you need to
- tick the box on [the tax form](#) confirming that you have informed the Belgian national bank about the accounts.
- complete the form available at [Communication des comptes étrangers au PCC](#).
- send the completed form, along with a copy of both sides of your Belgian residence permit, to: Banque nationale de Belgique, Point de contact central, Boulevard de Berlaimont 14, 1000 Brussels, Belgium.

**PhD candidates & postdoctoral researchers with a scholarship or fellowship**

PhD candidates and postdoctoral researchers receiving a scholarship or fellowship do not pay income tax, but **do need** to complete a tax return (‘declaration fiscale’). When submitting your tax return, you should enclose a copy of your scholarship or fellowship award letter, which confirms that it is not taxable income.

**PhD candidates, researchers, academic & administrative staff with an employment contract**

PhD candidates, researchers and academic and administrative staff with a ULB employment contract need to complete a tax return relating to income earned during the previous calendar year.

**Completion of tax form before leaving Belgium**

Before leaving Belgium, you should go to the tax office (address indicated on your last tax form) and complete a special tax form covering the period up to your departure. Instructions about how to proceed can be found [here](#).

**Unemployment benefits and pension rights**

Belgium has signed many international bilateral social security agreements that 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 in your home country. Information is also available on [Social Security](#), [My Pension](#), and from the ULB [Human Resources](#) department.
Information for families

**Well baby clinics**

The ‘Office de la Naissance et de l’Enfance’ (ONE) and ‘Kind en Gezin’ provide a free preventive medicine service for children from birth to age 6, through their well baby clinics.

At the clinics, children can receive mandatory vaccinations and their growth is monitored; parents can ask for advice about feeding and any concerns or problems encountered.

You can look for a well baby clinic close to where you live via the [ONE website](#) and the [Kind en Gezin website](#).

Vaccination against the following diseases is mandatory in Belgium: polio, diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, Haemophilus influenza type b, measles, rubella (German measles) and mumps. Vaccination is also recommended against pneumococcus, Meningitis C, Hepatitis B, chickenpox and Rotavirus.

**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’ (pre-school childcare facilities for children aged 18 months to 3 years) that are regularly monitored and approved by these organizations can be found via 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 subsidized pre-school childcare, where the amount paid by parents depends on their income. The cost varies from +/- 50€ to 650€ per month for subsidized crèches and child-minders. Private crèches and child-minders charge all parents a fixed amount (which can be between +/- 600€ and 850€ per month).

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

**Schools**

**Local Belgian schools**

Belgian schools are generally of a good standard. 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. Whenever possible, we would advise that you visit schools – or ask friends or colleagues to visit them for you – before making your choice.

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. Some schools in Wallonia offer French or English immersion classes, while in Brussels there are only Dutch immersion classes in French-speaking schools.

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.

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.

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.

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).

**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 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 (‘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.

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](#).

Information about Dutch-speaking schools with places available can be found [here](#).

**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 (in Wezembeek Opperem), a Lycée Français (in Uccle) and a Japanese School (in Auderghem). All these schools are fee-paying and expensive. 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 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. There is also a European School in Mol, near Antwerp. Information about the European School network can be found [here](#).

**Babysitters**

If you do not have friends or neighbours who can babysit for you, the “Ligue des Familles” has a list of trained and recommended babysitters.

**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.

Monthly child benefit is paid for all dependent children up to the age of 18, and for students in full-time higher education up to the age of 25.

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

If you are eligible to receive child benefit, please contact the ULB Human Resources Department or the International Welcome Desk 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. 

This link provides information about all the ULB libraries.

Visiting researchers can only enrol at ULB libraries 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, Tel. 02/650 29 29) that offers consultations in general and specialised medicine (dermatology, gynaecology, psychiatry, cardiology, gastroenterology, sports medicine).

It is open Monday-Friday 8.00-18.30. Doctors’ fees are fully reimbursed by the mutuality if you are a ULB student, PhD candidate, postdoctoral researcher or a member of ULB academic or administrative staff.

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).

Aimer à l’ULB is a family planning centre open providing:
- information and consultations regarding contraception, pregnancy, abortion, sexually-transmitted infections (testing and treatment)
- emergency contraception and pregnancy tests
- consultations with a psychologist or a psychotherapist
- legal advice or family mediation services, or take part in educational activities on sexual and emotional health.

All consultations are confidential. The centre (38 avenue Jeanne, Tel. 02/650 31 31) is open Monday-Friday 9.00-19.00 and Saturday 9.30-12.30, including during university holidays.

Psycampus (127 avenue Buyl, Tel. 02/650 20 25) is a confidential counselling service for students and members of staff.

Psycampus is open morning and afternoon, Monday-Friday. Appointments can also be arranged on the Erasme campus.

ULB-Culture

ULB-Culture organizes a whole range of activities: film projections, concerts, exhibitions, lectures, debates…. The office is on the Solbosch Campus, Building F1, 4th floor (Tel. 02/650 21 57, culture@ulb.ac.be). The full programme of activities is available here.

ULB-Culture also offers a Culture pass (costing 12.5€ per year for ULB staff and students), which entitles you to reductions for cultural activities at ULB and at partner theatres, museums and cinemas in Brussels and Charleroi.
**ULB Sports**

A wide range of sports activities are organized on the ULB Solbosch and Erasme campuses.

The programme of activities is available [here](#) for the Solbosch campus and [here](#) for the Erasme campus.

In order to take part in the activities organized by ULB Sports, you need to buy the annual sports card. Information about the cost of the card and how to purchase it can be found at [on the ULB Sports website](#).

ULB Sports also organises [activities for the children](#) during school holidays.

**Food**

There are cafes and restaurants on the Solbosch (building F1), Plaine, Flagey, Erasme and Gosselies campuses offering food at democratic prices. See [here](#) for further information. There are free water fountains in all ULB cafes and restaurants.

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

A market selling locally produced and organic food is held on the Solbosch and Erasme campuses on Tuesday. Information about precise location and opening times can be found [here](#).

**Internet and e-mail**

Free Wi-Fi access is provided on the ULB campuses. All ULB academic and administrative staff, researchers, PhD candidates 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 request for activation of a network identity [on the ULB website](#).

Visiting researchers can only receive a ULB email address after registration with the [International Welcome Desk](#).

**Travel**

A travel agency (‘Service Voyages’) is located on the Solbosch campus (building F1, Tel. 02/648.96.58, open Monday-Friday, 9.00-17.30) and Erasme campus (open Monday-Friday, 9.00-16.30, Tel. 02/555 38 63).

If your trip is being paid for by ULB, you may book it through this travel agency and the invoice can be directly paid by your department.

For further information, see the [website of the Service Voyage ULB](#).

**Campus maps and how to reach the ULB campuses**

In the [following link](#) you can find interactive maps of the various ULB campuses and information on how to reach them on public transport.
Banking

**Academic and administrative staff and researchers**

In order to open an account at a Belgian bank, academic and administrative staff and researchers paid by ULB or another Belgian institution need to provide some or all of the following documents (depending on your nationality):

- passport or identity card
- signed rental contract
- employment contract or fellowship award letter
- Annexe 15 document issued by the Foreigners’ desk at the town hall of your municipality of residence when you initiate the registration procedure
- copy of your Belgian residence permit.

If you would like to open an account prior to arrival in Belgium or before you have signed a rental contract and registered at the town hall, the Expat banking services of

- ING
- BNP Paribas Fortis
- KBC

may be able to assist you.

**Students and PhD candidates**

In order to open a bank account, **EEA 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-EEA 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-EEA 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 (eg. driving license, social security card or other official document that includes your address).

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

The ING bank on the Solbosch campus will **exceptionally** open accounts for students and PhD candidates living in a ULB student residence or partner residence (and who do not come from a
country under embargo) on the basis of their rental contract and before they have registered at the town hall.

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


- **BNP Paribas - Fortis**

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

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

Transport

Brussels public transport network

In Brussels, the public transport company (which runs buses, trams and metros) is called ‘STIB-MIVB’.

Timetables can be found [here](#) and a map of the network [here](#). 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 [here](#).

Tickets

One ticket entitles you to a 1-hour journey on the STIB network (except for the NATO-Brussels Airport section of line 12), during which you can change vehicle as many times as you like.

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.

Rather than buying single tickets, we recommend that you buy a MOBIB card (for 5€) at a STIB sales outlet, on which you can load 10 tickets at a time (for 14.50€) or season tickets. If you want to purchase a monthly or annual season ticket, you will need to get the MOBIB card with an ID photo.

Information about STIB sales outlets is available [here](#).

Ticket prices

Ticket prices can be found [on the STIB-MIVB website](#).

1 journey: 2.50 € if purchased inside a bus or tram, 2.10 € if purchased prior to travel

10 journeys: 14.00 € if loaded onto a MOBIB card at a STIB sales outlet or machine.

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 50 €. This is also valid on night buses. For information see [here](#).

You are aged 25 to 64

1 month season ticket: 49 €; annual season ticket: 499 €. For information see [here](#).

You have BIM status with the mutuality

You can purchase a monthly season ticket for 8.10€ and an annual season ticket for 85€.
**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.

Information about taxis in Brussels and the cost of rides can be found [here](#).

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 [here](#) (which includes a link to a trilingual brochure). For further information see [the Collecto website](#).

**Uber**

There is a good Uber network in Brussels, but it is not currently available elsewhere in Belgium. You can reserve a ride with Uber X, Uber Black and Uber Van via [the Uber website](#).

**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 53€ 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 [the Belgian Rail website](#).

**Cycling**

There are an increasing number of cycle paths in Brussels – and an increasing number of cyclists. A map showing cycle paths is available [here](#).

While it is not mandatory in Belgium to wear a helmet, it is definitely advisable to do so. Take care not to get your tyres stuck in tramlines and to give priority to vehicles coming from the right at crossroads. If you buy your own bike, make sure you get a good lock (and even insure your bike) as there is a lot of bike theft in Brussels.

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!, if you take out an annual membership (costing around 35 euros) the first half hour of any journey is free, and you then pay between 0.5€ and 2€ for each additional half hour. You can subscribe to the system and find information about tariff plans on the Villo! website and app. There are special rates for people affiliated to ULB (for information, search under ‘Cambio’ on the ULB intranet).

For information about availability of bikes, see here.

With Blue Bike, you can rent a bike for a whole day for +/-3€, after paying an annual membership fee of 12€. For further information see here.

**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 the Cambio website.

Special rates are available to people affiliated to ULB. For information, search under ‘Cambio’ on the ULB intranet. When registering, you need to send a copy of your ULB card, and indicate that you are affiliated to ULB and would like to benefit from the special rates.

**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 procedure 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 procedure 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 here.
To check whether your non-European driving licence is recognized in Belgium, see [here](#).

**Car importation and registration**

If you are importing a car or motorbike into Belgium, you will need to register it 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](#).

For further information, see [here](#).

**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 (‘omnium’ in French). 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 or of English, 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.

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.

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.

‘ULB Langues’ offers free French and English lessons for PhD candidates, researchers and members of academic staff in collaboration with Fondation 9 (click on Students ULB). As demand for lessons is high, make sure you register well in advance.

Other language schools offering lessons in a variety of languages at democratic prices are CVO and EPFC.

For information about Dutch lessons in Brussels, here.
Phone, Internet, Cable Television

There are 3 main mobile phone networks in Belgium (Proximus, Orange 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.

For further information, see Proximus, Orange, Base, Lycamobile (good option if you give many calls outside Belgium), Mobile Vikings (a good option if you have a smartphone, want plenty of data but do not want to take a contract; 1 hour free calls per day to other Mobile Vikings users).

If you are interested a package covering internet, cable TV, mobile and/or home phone, the best options, depending on your municipality of residence, are Proximus, SFR, VOO, Orange, Scarlet, Telenet.

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.

For prices in Brussels, see here.

The cost of living in Belgium is quite high, and a single person will need an annual budget of around 12,000€.

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

- +/- 250€ for food
- +/- 30€ for health insurance and medical fees
- +/- 100-200€ for utilities, if not included in the rent
- +/- 45€ for internet, 25€ for mobile phone.

Food shopping

The cheapest supermarkets are the Colruyt, Lidl and Aldi. Carrefour and Delhaize offer good quality products, but are somewhat more expensive.

You can check where the supermarkets are located via Lidl, Aldi, Colruyt, Carrefour and Delhaize.

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 here.

There are plenty of organic and zero-waste shops in Brussels and elsewhere in Belgium. For information see here.

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.

Other valuable sources of information are the Brussels Tourist office, Visit Brussels, the Wallonia Brussels tourist office and the Flemish tourist office.

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

Brussels has several excellent museums, among which are
- the Fine Arts Museum, with an impressive collection of Primitive Flemish and modern art masterpieces
- the Comic Strip Museum
- the Royal Museum of Art and History

The Centre for Fine Arts puts on some excellent temporary exhibitions.

A full list of museums in Brussels can be found here.

The websites Agenda Brussels and Que Faire? are good sources of information about what is going on – and Cinenews provides cinema programmes throughout Belgium.

Last-minute tickets for theatre and cinema can be bought at reduced prices through Arsene 50.

To discover Brussels through the eyes of a local, contact Greeters Brussels or check out the website Spotted by Locals.
Before leaving Belgium

Cancel your rental contract at least 3 months before your expected departure date, by sending a registered letter to the owner.

Schedule the exit inspection (and make sure your accommodation has been thoroughly cleaned before the inspection).

Request return of your rental deposit.

Go to the tax office and complete a ‘déclaration spéciale’ covering the period up to your departure. Instructions about how to proceed can be found in the following link.

The contact details of your tax office can be found on the letter you received from the tax office after submission of your tax form (note de calcul (avertissement-extrait de rôle) or in the tax offices guide (guide des bureaux. Particuliers > Déclaration > Déclaration à l’impôt des personnes physiques > votre commune > catégorie ‘Particuliers’).

Return your residence permit to the town hall before leaving Belgium and request a Modèle 8 document. If you are a non-EEA citizen and will be flying from or transiting through another airport in Europe when you leave Belgium, you need to keep your residence permit until the end of your journey and then send an email to the town hall to ask to be deregistered.

Cancel your health insurance with the mutuality (by sending a copy of the Model 8 document issued by the town hall).

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 via the Bpost website.
Useful websites

For newcomers to Belgium
Expat Arrivals
The Bulletin
Expatica
Angloinfo
Be European Be Brussels
Be Brussels

Leisure activities
Visit Brussels
Shop in Brussels
Resto.be
Brussels Life
USE-IT Brussels
Bip Online

Foreign embassies and consulates in Belgium
Federal Public Service Foreign affairs

We recommend that you register with the consulate of your home country in Belgium.
ULB Contact persons

International Welcome Desk

Tel. +32 (0)2/650 35 85
Email: welcome@ulb.ac.be
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1050 Brussels
Belgium

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- Faculté des Sciences de la Motricité
- Faculté de Philosophie et Sciences Sociales
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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
From a mobile phone – dial 02/650 26 14

*If no landline available or off campus:*
Ambulance and fire brigade – 100
European emergency number - 112
Police – 101

*For any questions relating to harassment at ULB – contact stop.harcelement@ulb.ac.be*