



VRIJE
UNIVERSITEIT
BRUSSEL



2026 - 2027

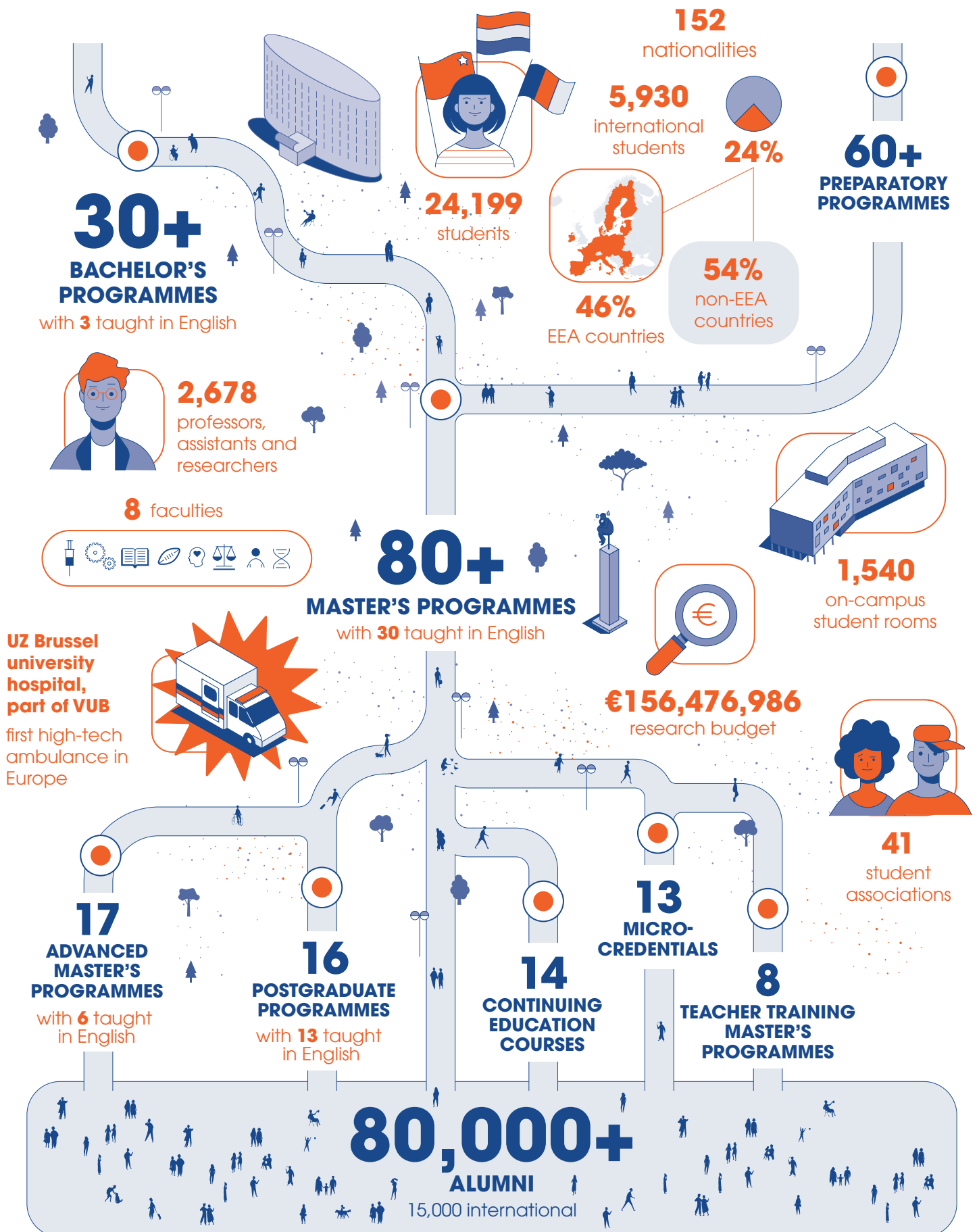


Social Sciences

180 ECTS



VUB IN FIGURES



Welcome to VUB, Welcome to Brussels	03
The World Needs You: Think Critically, Choose VUB	04
The Campus, your second home	07
Why Social Sciences?	10
Get ready	12
Studying Social Sciences at VUB and UGent	14
Key Threads of the Programme	17
Bringing the World to Your Classroom	18
Overview of the Programme	22
Weekly Schedule	26
Mastering Your Education	28
Ready for the Future	30
Practical Information	32

WELCOME TO VUB WELCOME TO BRUSSELS

WELCOME TO VUB!

Studying at university is an unforgettable experience. It is a time that is full of freedom, but it also brings challenges and expectations. You study the world in order to better understand its complexity. You map out a path to your future, or at least the next step. You have fun and forge friendships for life.

At VUB, you are at the centre. This stems from our humanist roots. Our goal is to challenge you and shape you into an independent, critically thinking global citizen. We equip you, but the path is yours to choose.

Through our entrepreneurial DNA and our commitment to excellence in teaching and research, our human scale and our vibrant Brussels environment, we aim to offer you that extra something that makes your university experience even more memorable.

Welcome to VUB. Welcome to Brussels.

Jan Danckaert, Rector



THE WORLD NEEDS YOU



THINK CRITICALLY, CHOOSE VUB

Nothing is unthinkable; everything is possible. Especially if you choose the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, where thoughts have complete freedom and you can choose your own path.

STRONG TEACHING, PERSONAL APPROACH

When you choose one of our master or bachelor programmes, you're choosing quality. The VUB is recognised as one of the best universities in Europe. That's clear not just in our place in the rankings, but also in our approach: committed lecturers, challenging classes and an environment where you can really develop your talents.

We use digital tools, but personal contact is just as important to us. Small groups, direct interaction with lecturers and strong bonds between students all mean that you truly learn how to work together. Knowledge shouldn't remain in books: you'll apply it to real-world challenges.

Lectures and courses are connected to innovative research in 150 research groups. So you're not only up to date with the latest scientific developments, you also learn how to use them in practice. As an urban university, we look beyond the campus walls: we want our students to make an impact.

Our social focus and personal guidance ensure you feel at home here right away. You'll share our campuses with more than 24,000 fellow students from Belgium and abroad. That creates a true international atmosphere, and you're never alone. The VUB is always there.

CRITICAL MINDS, OPEN HEARTS

The VUB is a young university with a long tradition of critical thinking. We take nothing for granted and interrogate the facts. Absolute truths do not exist: we ask questions and back up our answers with facts and arguments. You'll learn to do that here too.

Having an opinion is good, but you have to be able to defend it. That's why, at VUB, you'll gain not only knowledge but also the ability to think critically and substantiate your views – skills that will help you at university and in later life.

And the best part is that you won't be doing it alone. The VUB is a close-knit and welcoming community where everyone can be themselves. Whoever you are, wherever you come from: together we are the VUB. We believe in talent and providing opportunities, whatever your situation. We want every one of our students to succeed, on campus and beyond.



ENTER BRUSSELS, EXIT BOREDOM

Brussels is where it all happens. Politics, activism, corporate headquarters, celebrations of sporting heroes, rebellious creativity, the pulse of the world. When you study at VUB, you study in the heart of Europe. A Brussels 'ket' is at home in a cultural melting pot, jumps smoothly from one language to another, and knows how to respect everyone's customs. Later, this will be your key to an international career.

Brussels is also a true student city. Stroll through the streets around the Bourse and you immediately realise that Brussels is not just cosy but a hotspot for culture enthusiasts and foodies. It is lively all year round and yet you will find moments of peace and quiet. Get to know Brussels, find your own way and make it your new home. Soon you will embrace its quirks. And if you are already at home in the city, share it with your fellow students. Once Brussels grabs you, it will never let you go.

UNLIMITED AMBITION, CLOSE TIES

It is not only Brussels that exudes a cosmopolitan atmosphere: so does our university. Students from more than 150 countries come to VUB every year, so you do not have to go abroad to get a taste of the world and build a global network. Of course, many students want to do just that, and we want to help you make your international dreams come true.

Every day, we collaborate with higher education institutions, both within and beyond Europe. We are a proud co-founder of EUTOPIA, an alliance of 10 European partners and, for us, the European university of tomorrow. International internship and career opportunities are up for grabs, both close to home and across borders.

SHORT DISTANCES, LOW THRESHOLD

You will find almost all our faculties on the green VUB Main Campus in Elsene. Only the Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy is located on the VUB Health Campus in Jette, in the shadow of our university hospital. Both campuses are easily accessible thanks to numerous bus and tram connections. The VUB Main Campus is situated next to Etterbeek railway station.

Living on our campuses is a great experience. You stroll from your class, past your room and our sports facilities, to the restaurant and back again. There is no traffic to dodge, only inviting lawns. Campus life means you can connect quickly and easily, including with students from other disciplines. You save time every day, and you immediately feel at home here.

THE 'V' OF VUB

Vrijheid – freedom – is fundamental to Vrije Universiteit Brussel. And above all, we value freedom of thought: rights, as humans and scientists, to question everything critically, without prejudice or predetermined views. The world still needs that freedom.

Based on this notion of freedom, VUB is open to all students, regardless of their religion or worldview. We support every student to develop into an autonomous, responsible and critically thinking global citizen. Equality, openness and tolerance are at the core of our humanistic vision. We see philosophies of life, including religion, as a personal choice within the private sphere. We respect them but do not facilitate their practice. Our focus is on quality education, based on independent research and outstanding science.

THE CAMPUS, YOUR SECOND HOME

Alice (20), Amy (19) and Pedro (20) live and study on the Etterbeek campus. They study different subjects, but at VUB they share the same way of thinking.



Alice: "The three of us met at a Duvel party and we clicked almost immediately. Right from the first day you feel that **VUB** is a melting pot of individuals who are all able to be themselves. I found that very liberating. The best nights are the ones where we sit talking and philosophising with a slice of pizza. I feel accepted here for who I am and how I think. A great feeling."



Amy:
"VUB has really become my home away from home. I've met so many people here. We often go to the exhibitions in **Pilar** or have spaghetti on the terrace. You meet a lot of VUB students off campus too. The coffee bars in the city are perfect for studying together. And the brown cafés around **Sint-Gorik** are great for dancing."



Pedro:
"As a student who commutes, it is not always easy to combine sports with studying. After all the lectures, practicals and study sessions, I really need a sporting outlet. On campus, I discovered the **swimming pool** and took out a subscription at **Basic Fit** at a reduced student rate. It is great!"

THE CAMPUS, YOUR SECOND HOME



Looking for a coffee or a quick bite to eat? In the heart of the campus, on the esplanade between buildings D and E, you will find **Bar Buna**. With its spacious terrace, this café is a popular spot.



At the first sign of sunshine, students flock to this lovely **green space** on campus. Whether it is to talk, study, eat or meditate - join them!



Fewer in-person lectures on campus, more free periods or online classes... Reserve your place at one of the **study areas**.



Whether you choose meat, fish, vegan or just want spaghetti every day - choose the **student restaurant** and you will never leave with an empty stomach!

COMMITMENT AND AMBITION IN OUR DNA



It is easy to spot the VUBer in the team, or so we always say. Whether it is true or not, you will find out for yourself. But there is certainly such a thing as the “DNA of VUB”: a unique blend of openness, critical thinking, and commitment to people and the world. Immersing yourself in the V of VUB will stand you in good stead when it comes to fulfilling your ambitions.

Of course, becoming an engaged and free-thinking global citizen is not something that happens only within the lecture hall. That’s why VUB offers you opportunities for personal development both inside and outside your study programme. We challenge you to set your own goals, venture into the city and get the most out of student life.

PERFECT YOUR OWN FUTURE

Even during your studies, you can work towards your professional ambitions. Our guidance helps you launch your career. You can complete an internship within the rich professional context of Brussels, or elsewhere in the world, of course. Do you want to be an entrepreneur? Take your first steps via StartLab.Brussels. We can also set you on the path to pursuing your dreams abroad. There is nothing quite as enriching as studying or working in a different country.

Brussels is the ideal place to perfect your multilingualism. In our language centre, over lunch at a language table, through evening classes, or with your new friends from all over the world - the campus is teeming with languages. Several faculties even offer you the chance to take classes in French with our friendly neighbours at the Université libre de Bruxelles.

DARE TO THINK CRITICALLY

VUB aims to create real impact by sharing its scientific findings through a broad public programme of lectures, exhibitions, books and plays. Our scientists, alumni and various partners work together to challenge you to think critically. Because change in the world starts with us. By examining and questioning our own knowledge, we arrive at new insights and solutions.

Do you agree the world can – no, must – change? Are you ready to engage with those who think differently, because they might be right? Expand your understanding of social trends with VUB’s Pauwels Academy of Critical Thinking (PACT), where we invite dissenting speakers to Brussels and engage in dialogue with them.

GROW THROUGH FUN WITH FRIENDS

Free and critical debate with the Vrij Onderzoek study circle? Contributing to student magazine De Moeial? Helping fellow students as a tutor? Advocating for ecology with the Green Team? Politics and activism? Music, games or creative projects? Earning your first cap for the VUB Foxes? There are organisations and initiatives for every interest. Being young with your peers and doing what you love is a great way to learn.

VUB has its own student traditions too. Of course, parties are part of that, but our student circles also represent a fine tradition, with St V, the parade in honour of VUB’s founder, being the absolute highlight.

Finally, there is strong student representation at VUB. Students help determine the path of their own university, at every level. This is your opportunity to develop your leadership qualities.

“Someone has to ask the questions that no one else is asking, someone has to come up with the unthinkable option. And above all, turn them into relevant solutions. Disney has superheroes. In real life, we have VUBers.”

Ben-Jan Verhoogstraeten, student

WHY SOCIAL SCIENCES?



ALL GOOD THINGS COME IN THREES

Two top universities share their knowledge to design a selected programme based on three social sciences: political science, sociology and communication studies. One winner: you. We will let our programme director and co-director explain what makes this programme so unique.

PROF. WENDY VAN DEN BROECK, VUB PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

"Today's societal problems are complex, cross boundaries, require critical thinking and cannot be studied in isolation. The Bachelor of Science in Social Sciences offers students a unique perspective on our contemporary societal challenges: an English-taught interdisciplinary bachelor's programme tapping into the experience of two universities and seven academic departments with a highly motivated teaching staff that consists of experts in their respective domains. Our student body is also unique, comprising students from over 90 nationalities, each bringing their own perspectives and critical reflections to our classes in an open atmosphere of tolerance and diversity. This creates a unique learning experience where we, as staff, not only share knowledge but also learn from our students every day.

After completing the bachelor's programme, you will be an expert in the three disciplines of our programme, with strong methodological expertise and the necessary problem-solving and critical thinking skills. This will prepare you exceptionally for the challenges of a master's programme as well as for your future professional career."

PROF. FREDERIK DHAENENS, UGENT CO-DIRECTOR

"This unique bachelor's programme challenges the assumption that academics should train students to become experts in a single discipline. We train you to become an independent thinker and problem solver who is at home in the different disciplines within the social sciences. We believe that a holistic approach is the best way to understand complex and timely social issues and empower a new generation of social scientists. The programme introduces you to established and new thinkers and methods in sociology, political science, and communication studies. Repeatedly, courses and assignments will encourage you to look at contemporary social phenomena from diverse and contrasting perspectives.

Organised by Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) and Universiteit Gent (UGent), you will have classes in two different but equally vibrant cities with a strong academic culture. Enthusiastic and committed teachers each have their own research expertise, ranging from international policies and social inequality to popular media. We are eager to share with you what we are passionate about, but we also know that what truly makes this programme incomparable is what students from all over the world bring to it."



GET READY

GET PREPARED

Start your studies with confidence by preparing well in advance. Check if your knowledge is up to date and find out where you can grow. Online tests and other preparatory tools are available to help you get ready. See the full overview at www.vub.be/en/prior-knowledge-preparation.

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE IN MATHEMATICS

A good foundation in mathematics is essential for succeeding in this programme. It not only helps you grasp new concepts more easily but also ensures you can keep up with the statistics courses from the start.

- We offer an online prior knowledge test to help you assess whether your mathematics skills meet the required entry level. The necessary basic skills are listed by topic and illustrated with example exercises. These concepts are considered prior knowledge and will not be reviewed during the courses.
- Not sure if your math skills are up to speed? We recommend reviewing the basics in advance. If you speak Dutch, you can join the preparatory course 'Voorbereidingscursus Wiskunde voor Humane Wetenschappen', offered in September.

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

A strong command of English is essential for success in the Social Sciences programme. You'll be working with academic literature and textbooks, and actively participating in discussions and presentations. Want to improve your English before you start? Try reading more in English: news websites, articles, and books are a great place to begin. You can find more information about the preparatory activities and language requirements for this programme at www.vub.be/social-sciences.

ARE THERE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS?

To start a programme at university, you have to meet certain conditions. If you enter our bachelor programmes from Flemish secondary education, you will meet these basic conditions. For some bachelor programmes, you must take a compulsory positioning test before you can register. The results of a positioning test are not binding, and you can enrol in the programme regardless of your result. See the conditions for each programme at www.vub.be/en/admission-and-language-requirements.



HOW TO MAKE THE RIGHT STUDY CHOICE: TIPS AND TRICKS

- Get to know yourself. Self-awareness is the key to all wisdom, and the right choice of study! What are your passions, talents, hobbies and interests?
- Explore the higher education and the job market. Study in Flanders is the official website where international students can discover the English taught degree programmes of the 18 Flemish Higher Education Institutions in the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium. Here you will find information about studying and living in Flanders and Brussels. As you will notice there are a limited number of BA programmes taught in English.
- Test your prior knowledge.
- Choose wisely and realistically, prepare yourself, and face the challenge fully prepared!



I AM HAPPY WITH MY CHOICE. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Enrolling on time means getting off to a smooth start. There are a few steps to go through, and you will want access to your network, email address and online courses from day one. You can apply online for your programme at VUB throughout the year, even if you do not yet have a secondary school diploma. We will keep you informed of the steps you need to take to finalise your registration. You can find more information and register via www.vub.be/en/studying-vub/apply-and-enrol-vub.

Further practical information can be found later in this brochure.

CONTACT

Do you still have questions about choosing a programme? Drop by the Study Guidance service, the place to go for help with all your study-related questions. The team is present at every open day and you can email them at guidance@vub.be. Find out more at www.vub.be.



STUDY SOCIAL SCIENCES AT VUB AND UGENT

MADE IN BELGIUM, DEVELOPED FOR EUROPE

This ambitious joint programme by top universities Universiteit Gent and Vrije Universiteit Brussel tears down the walls between political science, sociology and communication studies – enabling you to build solid bridges between them. It is the best of three worlds, one in which you are about to excel thanks to your analytical approach, methodological strength and, of course, your authority on European institutions and social issues.

According to a persistent urban legend, Albert Einstein once spent an entire summer exploring the world of social sciences. He devoured as much literature as he could get his hands on, determined to come up with an idea as revolutionary as his theory of relativity had been for the natural sciences. But when autumn came, he had not made any progress. Einstein returned all his books to the university library, declaring that the social sciences were “far too difficult”.

THE POWER TO INTERSECT

The good news is that you do not have to be Einstein to study social sciences. The story tells us something about the complexity inherent to the house of social sciences, partially stemming from the ongoing competition between paradigms in many of its rooms. If social reality lacks an absolute truth, so does the ever-widening branch of disciplines studying it. There is almost never one explanation that fits the mould.

The Bachelor of Science in Social Sciences does not just help you to manage this interdisciplinary environment, a skill to cherish for life, it actually sees it as an essential asset of the social sciences. Combining the strengths of political science, sociology and communication studies, it gives you the perpetual advantage of looking at things from multiple angles. Especially since you adopt an analytical approach to the three disciplines, diving into theories and concepts on selected themes with real-life relevance, rather than memorising the chronological development of schools and currents. We want our students to develop critical skills, so they can formulate their own ideas about contemporary issues.

This bachelor's programme achieves this ambitious aim for its students by mixing up core courses with interdisciplinary ones. As you get better at adopting the analytical and interdisciplinary position towards social issues, you make better and more targeted use of all the knowledge gained during the programme. That is the point where you transcend the theoretical level and apply what you know to social reality. A practical asset at your side for many years to come – and one that is in high demand from many public and private organisations.

NEW SKILLS FOR A CAREER ON THE OLD CONTINENT

The Bachelor of Science in Social Sciences designers at VUB and UGent had your career on their minds when they put together the curriculum. They enriched it with two very important dimensions: a methodological one, making sure you master quantitative as well as qualitative research methods; and a topical one, a focus on contemporary problems across the globe.

The programme is designed as a launchpad for the citizens who will shape tomorrow's Europe.

The ability to distinguish between noise and signal is more crucial than ever. The digital revolution produces a rapidly growing amount of rough data. These data sets only reveal information to those with the right methods for interpretation at hand. The Bachelor of Science in Social Sciences sets aside a great deal of time to make sure you are ahead of this data-driven future. It is a priceless tool to have in your methodological research kit, whichever professional field you may choose.

Speaking of which, the programme is designed as a launchpad for the aspirational citizens who will shape tomorrow's Europe. Throughout the curriculum, several courses are imbued with a European dimension. Located in Belgium, surrounded by European and international

political, social and media organisations, this focus on Europe as the natural context in which the programme comes to life is intended to strengthen the link between your current studies and your future options.

The programme grants access to both English-taught and Dutch-taught master's programmes at the two organising universities.

BRUSSELS: A GREAT PLACE TO BECOME COSMOPOLITAN

Brussels may be the booming capital of Europe, but it remains a city tailored to the human heart. With over 1.2 million inhabitants, it has all the infrastructure, diversity, and energy of a world-class city, while maintaining the suburban character of the 19 communes that make it up. This gives the inhabitants and visitors of Brussels both a cosmopolitan and a homely feeling.

The VUB campus, where the Bachelor of Science in Social Sciences is mainly taught, reflects this duality. On the one hand, it is a perfect starting point to discover the city, well connected to the subway, railway and bus network. On the other hand, it is like a village in that same city, offering plenty of opportunities to live, play sports, eat, drink, meet up and study.

Taking up the Bachelor of Science in Social Sciences, the joint project of UGent and VUB, is an enriching educational and developmental experience, and one that paves the way for many more of these experiences to come. As an internationally accredited programme, it provides access to English-taught master's programmes in both of the organising universities and abroad.





COURSES AT UGENT

Although this programme is mostly taught on the VUB campus, several courses take place at UGent. This is especially the case in the third year of the bachelor's programme, when approximately half of students' courses are organised in Ghent. Some courses are also organised in Ghent during the first and second year. This allows students to make use of the Ghent infrastructure and develop close contacts with Ghent staff in the context of their bachelor's paper research. Founded in 1817, UGent is a key centre of research and higher learning in Belgium, and a top-100 university globally. Its 11 faculties offer more than 200 degree programmes and provide a place of study and work to more than 46,000 students and 15,000 employees. UGent's credo is "Dare to Think", challenging staff and students to look at the world from different perspectives and to question taken-for-granted perspectives and truths.

KEY THREADS OF THE PROGRAMME

Drawing on the combined insights of three disciplines (sociology, political science and communication studies) the Bachelor of Science in Social Sciences offers a three-year, English-taught programme that provides students with academic tools to help them analyse and better understand the societies they live in. Throughout these three years, you will become intimately familiar with the three scientific disciplines that make up the core of our programme.

POLITICAL SCIENCE

Is China on its way to becoming the next global superpower? Did the USA become more polarised under Donald Trump? What explains the rise of populism? Should immigrants have the right to vote in their host countries? What does democracy really mean? Political scientists love to sink their teeth into these types of questions, and analyse how societies govern themselves and make decisions. The political pillar of our programme provides you with the theories, concepts and techniques to better understand the ways in which power operates — from the level of everyday citizen interactions to political struggles situated at the international level.

SOCIOLOGY

Why do certain children do better at school than others? Which factors determine the type of job or income a person will get? Where do differences in musical taste come from? Why is our society so obsessed with beauty and slimness? Why do certain people live longer and healthier lives than others? These are just some of the questions posed and answered by sociologists. From the structure of large-scale social systems, like states or labour markets, to the fine details of everyday interaction, sociologists aim to uncover the basic principles that shape social life. The sociological pillar of our programme provides you with the concepts and techniques that help you study and understand these principles.

COMMUNICATION STUDIES

What is the role of AI in the newsroom? How is the refugee crisis portrayed in the media? What is the business model of Netflix? Why do some of us share private information and intimate feelings on social media? How do influencers impact teens' lives on social media? Why do younger generations still watch the sitcom Friends? Communication scientists are fascinated by these types of questions and wish to know more about the impact of media and communication on our everyday lives and on society as a whole. The communication angle of the programme provides you with the concepts and techniques that help you to critically reflect upon the ever-increasing role of (digital) media in our society.

METHODOLOGICAL CORE

In the Bachelor of Science in Social Sciences, we aim to train students who are not only capable of discussing complex problems but who can also effectively study those problems. That is why a considerable part of the curriculum is devoted to acquiring some of the key methods deployed by the social sciences from statistical analysis to interviewing and from participant observation to content analysis. Through a combination of theoretical lectures and hands-on exercises, you will learn to formulate key research questions and pick the techniques that are best suited to answering them.

BRINGING THE WORLD TO YOUR CLASSROOM

Throughout our lectures, seminars and discussion groups, we will provide you with the intellectual tools you need to make sense of today's complex world. However, that world is also much bigger than your classroom or campus. To help expand your horizons, your courses will regularly include guest speakers from inside and outside academia. From ambassadors to political activists, and from army colonels to Nobel Peace Prize winners, our programme prides itself on inviting speakers whose experience provides you with unique perspectives on often challenging topics. In addition, we ensure that you spend plenty of time outside the classroom, either by visiting some of Brussels' key political institutions or by going out and doing some fieldwork of your own.



A lecture by Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish, Palestinian doctor, activist and bestselling author.



Our students hard at work in the European Parliament.



A delegation of our students meeting with Nobel Peace Prize winner Tawakkol Karman.



Prof. Mona Lena Krook (Rutgers University, USA) giving a guest lecture.

BRUSSELS



GHENT



When you become a student of the Bachelor of Science in Social Sciences,, you will be joining one of the most nationally, ethnically and culturally diverse bachelor's programmes in the country. With students from over 90 nationalities, the world will quite literally be your village.



Loyle Wesley Campbell
@Canada

I never imagined myself studying abroad and being so welcomed. This programme placed me in the heart of Europe and allowed me to feel fully invited as a part of a greater community while being able to discover the beauty of Belgium.

[#warmwelcometobelgium](#)



Zinaïda Sluijs
@Belgium

It is a luxury for a 'bruxelloise' to have the entire world in my classroom without leaving my city! [#international](#)



Ana Olivares
@Mexico

This programme is literally an international experience. It has shown to me that sharing, friendship and knowledge have no borders! [#mexicantalent](#) [#sprouttobebrussels](#)



Arthur Melchior Pagliarini
@Brazil

This programme is a combination of a variety of excellent factors. We get to absorb knowledge from some of the best academics in social sciences. It is certainly a great experience for someone looking to pursue a career in social sciences, be it in sociology, political sciences or communication studies. [#interdisciplinarity](#)



Ruben Janze Lindberg

@Sweden

Being in my last semester of the programme, I cannot help but feel extremely grateful for all it has given me. Each semester has changed the way I view the world. But most importantly, constant throughout the programme, is a student body that engages me in how we should. [#changetheworld](#)



Maria-Lucia Rebrean

@Romania

The programme challenges its students every day through demanding essays and interesting debates. The professors are devoted to making the journey easier, but most of all interesting. Nowhere else can a programme like ours be found. [#unique](#)



Ilaha Aliyeva

@Azerbaijan

The experience that VUB, and especially Social Sciences, gives you is completely unique and will last a lifetime. Not a lot of places will offer such diversity in such an intimate setting. [#diversity](#)



OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME

Of course you are wondering which courses you will need to take. A broad array of topics will be covered during the first two years, giving you a firm base to build upon. In your third year, you'll have the opportunity to specialise in a social science discipline that matches your interests.

Classes will be organised both in Brussels (VUB) and in Ghent (UGent). Students in this programme commute between both cities and can make use of all campus facilities at both universities.

Bachelor Year 1	ECTS
Introduction to Sociology	6
Introduction to Political Science	6
Introduction to Communication Studies	6
European History	6
Introduction to the History of Political Ideologies	6
Introduction to Belgian Society and Politics	6
Statistics for the Social Sciences	6
Introduction to SPC Methodology	6
Seminar Current Issues I	6
Communicating Scientific Knowledge	6
Total	60

Bachelor Year 2	ECTS
Critical Thinking in Sociology	6
Critical Thinking in Political Science	6
Critical Thinking in Communication Studies	6
History of International Relations	6
Social Change and Inequality in Europe	6
Political Economy	6
Popular Media Culture and Diversity	6
Quantitative Research Methods	6
Qualitative Research Methods	6
Seminar Current Issues II	6
Total	60

You will find more information in the chapter 'Mastering your education' on page 28.



See www.vub.be/social-sciences for up-to-date information on the programme and the course units.

Bachelor Year 3	ECTS
Orientation - choose one from:	42
Sociology	
Key Thinkers in Social Theory	6
Health Sociology	6
Social Demography	6
Sociology of Work and Employment	6
Sociology of Education	6
Sociological Perspectives	6
Multivariate Data Analysis	6
Political Sciences	
International Relations Theory	6
History of Globalisation	6
Contemporary Politics in the Global South	6
Political Structures and Processes of the European Union	6
Democratic Theory and Practice	6
Political Ecology	6
Political Ethnography	6
Communication Studies	
Online and Social Media Strategies	6
Historical Perspectives on Media and Communication	6
Digital Media Sociology	6
International Communication	6
EU Media Policy	6
Visual Culture	6
Content and Textual Analysis	6
Bachelor's Paper	12
Elective Advanced Research Methods - choose one from:	6
• Multivariate Data Analysis: compulsory course in Sociology orientation, elective course in Political Sciences and Communication Studies orientations • Generalised Linear Techniques • Political Ethnography: compulsory course in Political Sciences orientation, elective course in Sociology and Communication Studies orientations • Content and Textual Analysis: compulsory course in Communication Studies orientation, elective course in Political Sciences and Sociology orientations • Audience Research • Policy Analysis	
Total	60

YOUR ACADEMIC CAREER AT VUB

Academic bachelor

Social Sciences

180 ECTS



Master

Political Science:
European and
International
Governance

60 ECTS

Politieke
Wetenschappen:
Democratie en
Innovatie

60 ECTS

Communication
Studies: Digital
Media in Europe

60 ECTS

Communication
Studies:
Journalism and
Media in Europe

60 ECTS

Communicatie-
Wetenschappen:
Media en
Samenleving

60 ECTS

Communicatie-
Wetenschappen:
Media, Strategie
en Marketing

60 ECTS



PhD

For further specialisation in a
specific subject



WEEKLY SCHEDULE

At university, you have fewer classes than in high school, but that does not mean you work less hard. A 60 ECTS programme is equivalent to a full-time job. You spend about 40 hours a week studying. You attend lectures, read books and articles, complete assignments, and prepare for exams. Fortunately, there is still plenty of room for free time. You can play sports, spend time with friends, explore Brussels, work a student job, and so on. The weekend offers a great opportunity to keep up with your studies, but it also gives you space to relax and enjoy your student life. It is up to you to take regular breaks, especially during large study blocks. Here is an example of what a weekly schedule might look like.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
08.00 - 11.00 Introduction to Communication Studies	10.00 - 12.00 Study Time - Introduction to SPC Methodology	09.00 - 10.00 Attend workshop on exam skills	09.15 - 10.15 Study time - Prepare Statistics Q&A session
11.00 - 13.00 Study time - Introduction to Communication Studies	13.00 - 16.00 Introduction to SPC Methodology	10.00 - 12.00 Study time/ assignment - Communicating Scientific Knowledge	10.30 - 11.00 Q&A session Statistics
14.00 - 16.00 Study time - Introduction to Political Science	16.00 - 19.00 Study Time - Statistics for the Social Sciences	13.00 - 15.00 Statistics for the Social Sciences	13.00 - 15.00 Introduction to SPC Methodology
16.00 - 19.00 Introduction to Political Science		16.00 - 17.00 Study time - Introduction to SPC Methodology	15.00 - 17.00 Study time - Introduction to Political Science
			17.00 - 19.00 Study time - Introduction to Communication Studies

LECT

SEM

SELF

FRIDAY

09.00 - 12.00

Introduction to
Communication
Studies

13.00 - 16.00

Communicating
Scientific Knowledge

17.00 - 19.00

Work on assignment
- Communicating
Scientific Knowledge



MASTERING YOUR EDUCATION

HOW MANY STUDENTS ARE ENROLLED IN THE PROGRAMME?

The Bachelor of Science in Social Sciences programme attracts a diverse group of students. About 300 new students join each year, and this number has been steadily increasing. In total, there are currently over 850 students enrolled, with approximately one-third having the Belgian nationality, another third having another European nationality, and the final third having a non-EU nationality. Class sizes vary, with first-year lectures often having 300 or more students. Additionally, there are smaller seminars that offer more interaction with peers, teaching assistants, and professors.

IS SPECIFIC PRIOR KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED?

No specific prior knowledge or advanced mathematics are required to start this bachelor's programme. We welcome students with upper secondary education. We offer an optional online maths test on the 'Is this you?' page of our website to assess your math skills. You can also prepare by reading related materials or checking the first-year course descriptions on the 'Programme' page of our website. However, we advise you to wait for your professor's instructions regarding acquiring textbooks and readings during the first class.

HOW DOES THE INTER-UNIVERSITY COLLABORATION BETWEEN UGENT AND VUB WORK?

As a Social Sciences student, you are considered a full student at both universities, with access to their facilities and services. Courses are taught by both VUB and UGent staff, with most administrative tasks on VUB platforms. Students should be prepared to commute between Ghent and Brussels at least once a week, with an approximate travel time of 1 hour and 40 minutes. Commuting discounts are available for students. Courses' distribution between Ghent

and Brussels varies by study year. First-year students primarily study in Brussels, with one second semester course in Ghent. Second-year students have some courses in Ghent, requiring one day of commuting per week. Third-year students split their courses between Ghent and Brussels, with commuting days based on electives and orientation. Finally, graduates receive a diploma from VUB, featuring the logos of both universities.

CAN I COMBINE THE PROGRAMME WITH A JOB?

The Bachelor of Science in Social Sciences programme is full-time and demands a high level of commitment. While part-time student jobs can be combined, regular full-time or daytime jobs are not compatible. Students are expected to attend 15-20 contact hours on campus and allocate 20-25 hours per week for self-study and assignments. There are no specific facilities for working students, but some teachers may offer flexibility at their discretion. The programme does not discourage part-time working students and allows for individual study paths to accommodate personal circumstances and preferences. Contact the study path counsellor for more information.

WHAT ARE THE PROGRAMME'S STUDY COSTS?

In Belgium, tuition fees are highly subsidised by the government, which means that students pay much less than the actual cost of their education. However, there are different rates for students with an EEA or a non-EEA nationality. All students pay an annual fee that consists of a fixed part and a variable part per credit for which you enrol. You can find a full overview of the tuition fees, study costs and options for financial support on our website.

DOES THE PROGRAMME OFFER INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES?

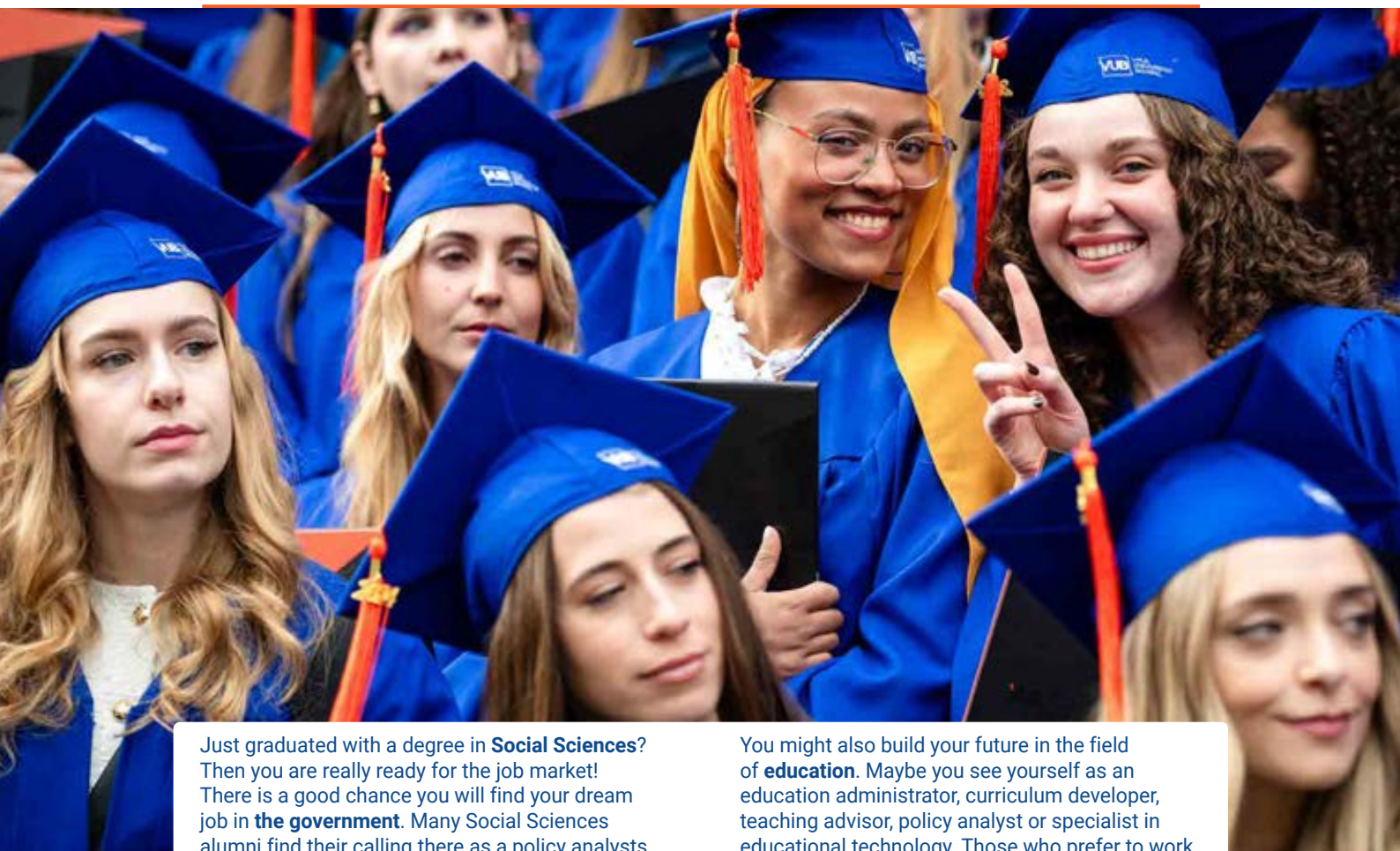
The Bachelor of Science in Social Sciences programme does not include internships. However, you can gain practical experience through student jobs, volunteering with relevant organisations, or post-graduate internships via the Erasmus+ Traineeship Programme. Additionally, you will be exposed to practical experiences during guest lectures, field trips, and coursework, including seminars, projects, and the bachelor's paper, which involve real-world social sciences challenges.

CAN I ENROL IN LANGUAGE CLASSES WITHIN THE PROGRAMME?

Language classes are not part of the programme. The programme is fully taught in English, and all students are expected to have a B2 level of English proficiency when they enter the programme. You do not need to master any other language, such as Dutch or French, to follow this programme, as all the course content and administrative communication are in English. However, if you wish to study English or another language for your personal or professional development, you can do so on campus at VUB or in Ghent. There are two options for language learning on the VUB campus: ACTO and CVO Semper. The Study Guidance Centre at VUB also offers dedicated workshops in academic English.



READY FOR THE FUTURE



Just graduated with a degree in **Social Sciences**? Then you are really ready for the job market! There is a good chance you will find your dream job in **the government**. Many Social Sciences alumni find their calling there as policy analysts, communication specialists, researchers, programme managers, diplomats, HR specialists, or public relations officers. From Finance and Economics to Public Health and Mobility, dozens of ministerial departments could use your **communication, sociological and political skills**.

Did you know there are many great jobs for Social Sciences alumni in the **media and cultural sector**? Think about film and TV companies, museums and galleries, arts councils and foundations, cultural heritage organisations, musical societies, and institutes for cultural education. A job as a media professional, museum curator, arts administrator, archivist, heritage manager, exhibition designer, or cultural programme coordinator could be just the thing for you.

You might also build your future in the field of **education**. Maybe you see yourself as an education administrator, curriculum developer, teaching advisor, policy analyst or specialist in educational technology. Those who prefer to work more closely with students can, of course, forge a career in the classroom as a teacher or lecturer, or become a student affairs administrator.

Or maybe you prefer the **non-profit sector**, perhaps as a volunteer coordinator, communications specialist, policy advisor, advocate, or consultant. The choice is yours!

AN ALMA MATER OPENS DOORS

Whatever job you choose, VUB will always be there for you. Our alumni create an open and accessible community for professionals, by professionals. Join LinkedIn, connect with inspiring alumni and lay the foundations for your future career.



SECTORS FOR SOCIAL SCIENCES ALUMNI

Political organisations

Public Relations (PR) and communication

Higher education

Research services

International affairs

Non-profit organisations



TOP 5 EMPLOYERS

European Parliament

Red Cross

FPS Foreign Affairs

Media Companies

Amnesty International



24%

Almost a quarter of our graduates work abroad. The Netherlands, Germany and the UK are the top three destinations.

“University was a real liberation, away from all those fixed norms and structures. You get a lot of autonomy and the direction you take is mainly determined by the topics you choose while writing your assignments.”

Nils Duquet,
Director of the Flemish Peace Institute

Scan this code and learn more about our VUB-alumni.



PRACTICAL INFORMATION

The 2026-2027 academic year begins on Monday, 14 September, when we welcome our new students during the orientation days. So you can find your way from day one. Do you have an urgent question? Go to www.vub.be or contact Student Information (info@vub.be). They are always ready to help you!

The place to ask questions

How much does studying cost, and what support is available? How can I apply for a student room? Which books and materials do I need? When do I have classes? What study support is available? These are all questions that are likely to be on your mind. All the information is available on our website, but you can also find guidance at www.vub.be/en/studying-vub/practical-info-for-students.

Study credits

At the start of your studies in a Flemish higher education institution like VUB, you receive 140 ECTS study credits from the government. You use that credit to add courses to your study programme. If you pass, you get your credits back. What's more: the first 60 ECTS you get back are doubled. If you fail one or more subjects after the second sitting, you lose these credits and will have to use credits from your learning account to retake the course the following year. To be allowed to study, you must have learning credits. You can check your balance online.



Tuition fees

Your tuition fees depend on the number of credits taken, your nationality, education and contract type. Students registering for an undergraduate or master's programme pay a fixed fee plus a variable amount per study credit. You can calculate your fees on our website.



Study financing

We want every student to be able to study without financial worries. You may be entitled to support such as the Flemish government's Study Grant, reduced tuition fees, rent allowance or an interest-free study loan. If you are in financial difficulty, want to know what support you qualify for or have any other questions, you can talk to the VUB Student Status and Study Financing team.



Test your prior knowledge

Do you want to prepare yourself as well as possible for higher education? Or are you just curious to test your current knowledge? VUB has developed short tests that take about one hour, tailored to various courses. You can take them online or on campus during an open day or at another event prior to your enrolment. The result tells you if you are well enough prepared at the start, or if it would be better to refresh your knowledge with a preparatory course. Find out more at www.vub.be/en/test-your-prior-knowledge.

Tutoring

Are you struggling with a particular subject and in need of extra support? Are you looking for an experienced fellow student who can advise you on study methods or help you make a study plan? Could you use some writing tips for a paper or want someone to proofread your text? You can request a tutor.



Orientation days

The orientation days for new students take place in the week before the start of classes. During these days, you can attend a range of interesting information sessions. You get important information for a strong start, a good idea of what to expect and get to know our campus, your fellow students and your programme. In addition, there will be plenty of fun activities. Attendance is expected.



Apply for your own space with a VUB student room

Take the opportunity to live in a student room – a kot – and seize the adventure with both hands. A kot on the VUB campus is a nice and accessible way to start your life as a student. You live and study on our campus, which is both practical and fun. Your kotcoach will be your point of contact.

Make sure to submit your application before 1 May and find out about the financial support options.



Get around easily in Brussels

Our campuses are easily accessible by train. The VUB Main Campus is right next to Etterbeek station, while the VUB Health Campus benefits from the many transport lines serving UZ Brussel, including from Jette station. Through the MIVB network, there are numerous combinations using the metro, tram and bus to discover the city. As a student, you enjoy special rates. Car and bike parking is also available on campus.



Teaching, revision, exams & holidays

The academic year consists of two semesters of 13 teaching weeks each, followed by one revision week. Then there are four weeks of exams, in January and June. If you do not pass, you can retake the exams during the second exam session from August to September. After each exam period, there is a week-long holiday. There is also a winter, spring, and summer break, plus a few days of academic leave, such as St V on 20 November, when we celebrate the founder of VUB.

Personalised support

Looking for tips on effective study methods? Do you have questions about your study path? Do you have specific support needs or want an extra challenge? The study guidance team is there for you throughout your university journey. A team of tutors, study pathway advisors, student psychologists, an inclusion coordinator, and career counsellors will be happy to answer all your questions and provide support for optimal study progress and well-being. VUB is the only university with such strong, centrally organised study guidance.



A healthy mix of in-person and digital learning

VUB is a pioneer in digitalisation and innovation. But you will not just be staring at a screen and consuming your teaching digitally. The quality of our education is founded on critical questioning, interaction and debate. Our humanist foundation revolves around people. Working with others is central to this philosophy – not only online but also in person. We have designed a considered blend of in-person and online work, with a balance of individual assignments and group work, as well as independent learning and interaction.

Study progress

At VUB, we expect you to make progress every year. This is outlined in the university's study progress rules, which are based on the following five principles:

1. Each academic year, you must pass at least 60% of the total credits you take.
2. For each subject, you must have passed or been deliberated after four exam opportunities or two enrolments.
3. Your study efficiency must be higher than 0%.
4. For your first enrolment in an undergraduate programme, you must pass at least 30% of the total credits.
5. If you have already been in higher education and are interested in one of our bachelor's or master's degrees or a bridging programme, check whether your new programme belongs to the same field of study as your previous one.

If you fail to meet points 1 and 2, you still have options. You will be given binding conditions for the following year – new criteria that you must meet. If you do not meet points 3 and 4, or if you do not meet the binding conditions from the previous year, you cannot re-register for a programme.

Depending on your response to point 5, you may start your new course with binding conditions. Check the website so you know exactly where you stand.



Mandatory model pathway in a new bachelor's degree

As of the 2023-2024 academic year, it is compulsory to follow a specific pathway for a first or shortened bachelor's programme, unless you belong to a group allowed to study flexibly. You have a maximum of two academic years to pass your modules. This is also known as the threshold system. Check the admission requirements of your programme, especially if you are not entering from Dutch-language secondary education.



Threshold

Students starting in the first bachelor or in a shortened bachelor's programme must have passed all the courses they took in that bachelor's programme after two academic years. Students who do not reach this threshold will be refused to continue this particular programme at all Flemish universities.



Flexible study and individual pathways

The following students may deviate from the model pathway and study flexibly from their first enrolment in a first or shortened bachelor's programme:

- Students with a special status
 - Working students combining studying with employment of at least 80 hours per month.
 - Scholarship students combining studying with employment of at least 16 hours a week.
 - Students with ReFlex status, such as those with a (learning) disability, a chronic illness, student representatives, or students in a special situation, such as pregnancy, informal caregiving, or refugee status.
 - Reorienting students who change courses within the same academic year, at the same institution or another.

- Students who have a bachelor's or master's degree
- Students in exceptional circumstances

With these special statuses, we aim to offer as many students in challenging situations as possible the opportunity to study and develop.



More than just studying

Feeling good about yourself is important for success. At VUB, we challenge you to get the best out of yourself while at university. VUB is about more than just studying. Both within and outside your programme, there are opportunities to build a network and develop yourself. You can set your own pace, with no obligation to commit to grand ambitions on day one. You can grow step by step. Your priority in the first weeks may just be to find your way and meet new people. VUB organises activities to help you settle in, and your fellow students, who have been through the same experience, will be happy to help you feel at home.

Lifelong learning

Studying is not just for the period between secondary education and starting a career. To stay ahead in a fast-changing society, you must keep up with technological developments and innovation in your field. VUB has a tradition of offering evening classes and supporting working students in undergraduate and graduate programmes.

There are also numerous postgraduate courses, continuing education opportunities, and micro-credentials — short courses in specific subjects that lead to a certificate. These courses update your professional knowledge and provide you with new or additional competencies. They are compact and manageable alongside a job. Check out the Nova Academy, a collaboration between several universities focused on lifelong learning.



Inclusive education

VUB is committed to making higher education accessible to all. Every student should be able to develop their full potential based on their unique talents. In 2023-2024, VUB implemented a new inclusive education policy. As part of this policy, some of the most frequently requested exam accommodations are applied by default for every student, regardless of whether they have ReFlex-status.



ENROLMENT

You can register from now until 23 September. If you do not yet have a secondary diploma but want to reserve your place, you can still register. If you want to register with a foreign diploma, please be aware that there are earlier deadlines for international applications.



SID-INS

You may have heard of them: SID-ins, organised by the Flemish government and pupil referral centres. Every higher education institution takes part, so in one visit, you can compare all the courses and schools. SID-ins are organised in each Flemish province. Thursdays and Fridays are for school visits while Saturdays are open to the public.

Leuven: 15-17 January 2026
Ghent: 22-24 January 2026
Limburg: 29-31 January 2026
Antwerp: 5-7 February 2026
Kortrijk: 26-28 February 2026

OPEN DAYS

Professors, support staff, and student ambassadors are all here to talk to you about teaching and course requirements, study guidance, student life, the campus, and life in Brussels, and anything else you would like to know. You can also explore the programmes, the library and the dorms. The day is intended to answer any questions you have about studying at VUB. Find out more at www.vub.be/open-days.

Sunday 15 March 2026
Sunday 26 April 2026
Sunday 30 August 2026

OPEN COURSE DAYS

During the spring break, VUB opens its doors to welcome you into its auditoriums. You can simply walk in, take a seat, and join a class. No preferential treatment — just life as it is at VUB. Read more at www.vub.be/open-course-days.

Spring break: 16-19 February 2026
Wednesday afternoons: 25 March and 1 April 2026

YOUR FIRST DAY

At the start of the academic year, we welcome all our new students. It's the perfect time to find out all the information you need and meet your fellow students. So do not miss it!

Monday 14 September 2026



THE WORLD NEEDS YOU


@VUBrussel


@VUBrussel


@VUBrussel


VUB - Vrije Universiteit Brussel


Vrije Universiteit Brussel



www.vub.be/en/social-sciences

Responsible publisher: Rector Jan Danckaert, Pleinlaan 2, 1050 Brussels. The information in this brochure is subject to change. No rights may be derived from this publication.