



Practical information for incoming students - Prior to departure

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1. ADMISSION LETTER

The admission letter is your formal admission to the IOB Master programme. This admission letter is generated via Mobility Online once the IOB has accepted the correct legalised academic documents for registration that you have submitted. The admission letter is required for your visa application and can also be used for study leave to your employer. You should keep your admission letter with you while you travel to Belgium as it is your official proof of the reason you are travelling to Belgium.

2. VISA APPLICATION AND PROOF OF SOLVENCY

Visa application

Information on how to apply for a visa can be found on the [UAntwerp Visa page](#). Please note that the procedure described there does not apply to ICP Connect scholars. If you are receiving a ICP Connect scholarship, you will receive specific visa instructions from the ICP Connect scholarship office.

Proof of solvency

A proof of solvency is one of the options, besides a guarantor or scholarship, to prove your financial solvability to the Belgian Embassy during a visa application and is highly recommended for self-sponsoring students. The proof of solvency issued by the University of Antwerp is accepted by Belgian Embassies to proof the financial solvency of students.

First, the student will transfer the required amount to the University of Antwerp, i.e. € 1000 per month in Belgium; a total of € 12,000 and € 100 handling fee for one academic year (12 months). Upon receipt of the transfer, the IOB issues a proof of solvency letter that enables the applicant to start a visa application.

Next, prior to arrival in Antwerp, the student opens a Belgian bank account for which he/she will receive instructions. Once the bank account has been opened, the University of Antwerp will transfer the funds in 3 instalments to the students' Belgian bank account, i.e. in September (or as soon as the Belgian bank account is activated), February and June.

Who can apply?

- applicants who have obtained a (provisional) letter of acceptance and have exhausted all other possibilities to provide evidence of sufficient financial means needed to obtain student visa type D
- students who need to extend a valid residence permit for a new academic year if already studying at the University of Antwerp

Procedure: submit a request for a proof of solvency to greet.annaert@uantwerp.be.

Important remarks

- A proof of solvency can only be issued if the exact required amount is received. If a higher amount is transferred, the student will not receive the surplus.
- Transaction costs are at the charge of the sender.
- Registration fees cannot be transferred within the framework of a proof of solvency.

3. REGISTRATION

Registrations for the academic year 2024-2025 starts on 1st July 2024 [through this link](#). You can only register if your visa has already been issued.

More information about enrolment is available [here](#).



4. ACCOMMODATION

The University of Antwerp has a [page dedicated to finding accommodation](#) for incoming (international) students.

Students can search for accommodation through the database called Kotweb. This website offers the largest database of student accommodation in Antwerp. Landlords who advertise their accommodation through this website comply with the statutory regulations in terms of quality, fire protection and urban development. Aside from Kotweb, the IOB also cooperates with the International Home for Foreign Students, ITBS. ITBS is not listed on Kotweb as they have a special status as student accommodation provider. They however comply with the aforementioned regulations. You can contact the ITBS directly: <https://itbsantwerpen.be/>

Important note! It is highly recommended to inform the IOB of your future address and landlord prior to signing a rental agreement or agreeing upon a student room. There have been some bad experiences with certain landlords in the past, and while we are not authorised to disclose the names of these landlords, we can advise students through a personal conversation on which landlords to avoid. Therefore before signing a lease, check with IOB: send an e-mail to greet.annaert@uantwerp.be Provide the address of your student room and contact details of your landlord. If all is well, you can proceed. If we suspect a problem, we will give you a call.

Tip: It is advisable to start looking for student accommodation as early as possible. Student housing in Antwerp is scarce so book your room as soon as possible. Do not wait until the last moment to search for accommodation!

5. REQUIRED ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE

All incoming students are required to have some knowledge of Micro and Macroeconomics, Quantitative Data Analysis (basic statistics) and Microsoft Excel. This knowledge is essential for several courses offered in all three Master programmes.

Students who intend to choose the unit 'Regression analysis and inference' within the course Research Methods II are also required to have knowledge of Stata and Advanced Statistics.

IOB provides an online learning platform with a self-study guide that allows incoming students to refresh their knowledge or to study the required material.

The online platform provides study guides, textbook chapters as well as online videos and tutorials on Micro- and Macroeconomics, Quantitative Data Analysis and Excel.

- Micro and Macroeconomics introduces you to the (most) basic concepts and ideas in economics. The micro-economics pre-course, among other topics, includes demand and supply (curves), the market equilibrium, price and income elasticity, as well as the law of diminishing returns and different market structures. The macro-economics pre-course, emphasizes measuring national income, economic growth and exchange rates.
- Quantitative Data Analysis refreshes your knowledge on statistics. You will be provided with a short update on sampling, and are invited to read about (and apply) univariate statistics and probability theory and are (again) introduced to inferential statistics, like confidence intervals and hypothesis testing. You will go through this material by yourself, but inferential statistics will also partly be addressed in class, given its complexity and its central role in social science research.*
- Excel introduces you to the basics; sorting, calculating and conditional formatting and tables and graphs.



An invitation to register on the online platform will be sent to you as soon as you are registered at the University of Antwerp. The pre-course can be accessed here once you are registered. Access and use of the platform: Please check the instructions [here](#).

Pre-test

At the beginning of the Master programme during the introduction week all students are required to take a pre-test on Micro- and Macroeconomics, Quantitative Data Analysis (basic statistics) and Excel. Participation in the pre-test is compulsory, but the result is merely informative, no sanctions are imposed when failing the pre-test.

Please note that the test results of students who are interested in the Mobility Window programme may be taken into consideration during the selection process.

Students for whom this is relevant will also take a test on Advanced Statistics during the introduction week. A pre-test for Stata is organised prior to the start of the course Research Methods II.

6. PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND ACADEMIC CALENDAR

Detailed course contents are available [online](#).

All three Master programmes are structured as follows (to be confirmed):

- 9 - 13 September 2024: Introduction Week
- 11 September 2024: Opening Academic Year 2024-2025 + graduation 2023-2024
- 16 September - 20 December 2024: Module I
- 5 - 6 October 2024: Kick-off weekend
- 23 December 2024 - 5 January 2025: Christmas holiday for students
- 9 January - 14 March 2025: Module II
- 19 March – 4 April 2025: Module III (2 ½ course weeks)
- 7 - 21 April 2025: Easter holiday for students
- 22 April – 6 June 2025: Module III Ctd. (7 course weeks)
- 10 June – 29 August 2025: Module IV (12 weeks)
- 11 September 2025: Graduation

The class schedule and the academic calendar will be made available by the start of the academic year.

7. COST OF LIVING, WEATHER AND LANGUAGE

Previously students have informed us that they were surprised by the high cost of living in Belgium. Costs such as restaurant visits, food, public transport and recreation should be well researched and budgeted for.

Overview of the costs:

- Tuition fee: please check [our website](#).
- Study materials: A total amount of approx. EUR 400 needs to be budgeted for the purchase of books, lecture notes, copies, etc.
- Accommodation: The average price for a student room with a shared bathroom and kitchen is EUR 440/month. The average price for a studio with a private bathroom and/or private kitchen is EUR 520/month. These amounts do not always include extra costs such as gas, electricity, water, internet. Additionally, students should budget two months of rent for the deposit.
- General expenses: In addition to the expenses above, students should budget approximately EUR 600 per month for expenses such as food and beverage, medical costs, recreation, visits and personal expenses.



- Health insurance (compulsory by law): membership fee will be paid by the University for ICP CONNECT scholarship students. Other students can register at a health insurance company for EUR 120 for the academic year. The health insurance covers up to 60% of medical expenses (doctor's visits and medicines). The health insurance only reimburses expenses; this means that students always need to advance these costs.

Student job

Studying at IOB is a full-time activity, and most international students find it hard to combine a full-time study programme with a job. However, working during the holidays or on the weekends may be feasible after a while. Basic knowledge of Dutch is often required for most jobs.

Weather

The Belgian weather is unstable and erratic. During the month of September, the weather should still be pretty nice, although the rain starts to fall by the end of the month when fall begins. October and November can be quite chilly, even though the real cold usually only gets to Belgium by the end of November. December and January can be very cold (between 10°C and -5°C) as winter then arrives with its hail and possible snow. Winter lasts until March when spring starts. From then on, the weather should get less chilly and sunnier. The highest temperatures are reached during the summer months July and August. It often rains in Belgium and it can get very cold, especially for people who are used to tropical temperatures, so a useful advice is to bring along some warm clothes, rain protecting clothes and an umbrella.

Language

Belgium has three official languages: Dutch (Flemish), French and German. The Northern part of Belgium (north of the capital, Brussels) is Dutch-speaking. The Southern part of Belgium (south of Brussels) is French-speaking. A small part in the east of Belgium is German-speaking. Belgian's capital Brussels is bilingual; Dutch and French. You will be staying in the Flemish part of Belgium, where Flemish is the lingua franca. Although quite some Flemish do speak English (certainly young people), we have received complaints from former students about communication problems with local Belgian people. We will offer an online crash course Dutch language in order to allow you to learn some basic words which are useful in daily life.

Information about Belgium (history, politics, health, economy, education, etc.) is available on <https://www.belgium.be/en> and <https://visitbelgium.com/>

8. BANK ACCOUNT

In general, banks will require a residence permit before students can open a bank account. However, KBC allows students to open a bank account prior to arrival in Belgium. Incoming students initiate the procedure to open a bank account with KBC bank using the following application procedure online: <https://www.kbc.be/retail/en/payments.html?zone=topnav>.

The manual can be downloaded [here](#). As soon as the application for a bank account is accepted, the account number will be communicated by e-mail.

It is advised to apply for the bank account not earlier than two weeks before arrival in Belgium.

ICP CONNECT scholars will need to open a bank account prior to their arrival in Belgium in order to enable the IOB to provide the scholarship allowance upon arrival in Belgium.

Tip: Do not fill out a Belgian address in the application form. The combination of a Belgian address with your international passport will hinder your application.



Tip: All students will be required to make an appointment at the bank in order to activate the bank account. It is advisable to go to a branch and ask for an appointment to be made.

9. IOB FACEBOOK GROUP

IOB has created a Facebook group for the academic year 2024-2025; you can request to become a member through <https://www.facebook.com/groups/938198397786665> (If you use an alias on FB, please inform the IOB student office so that your request can be approved. We will not accept member requests which we don't recognise based on our student lists.)

Before your arrival to Belgium, the FB group is intended to share information regarding travel/visa/... issues: i.e. to prepare your arrival and to interact between incoming students. While studying at IOB, the group will continue existing but will never be used as a tool for official communication. It rather will be used by students mainly to share information and to exchange ideas. Once the student group of 2024-2025 is complete, only students who are officially registered will be allowed to remain members.

10. MORE INFORMATION

More information can be found on the UAntwerp website for international degree students: <https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/study/international-degree-student/before-you-come/>

Be aware that not all the information listed there is applicable to IOB students.