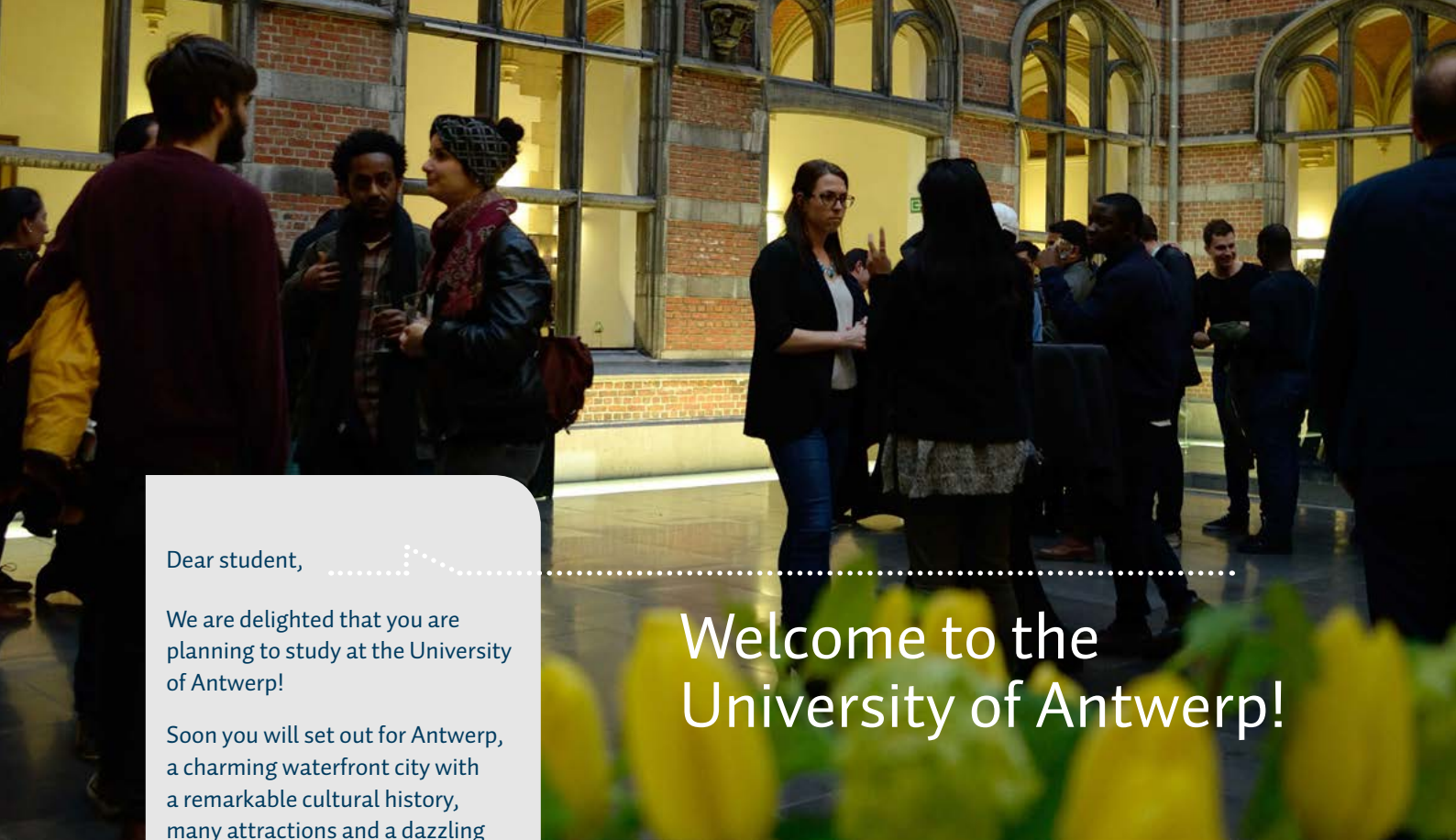


**WELCOME GUIDE FOR EXCHANGE STUDENTS**  
at the University of Antwerp



**University  
of Antwerp**



Dear student,

We are delighted that you are planning to study at the University of Antwerp!

Soon you will set out for Antwerp, a charming waterfront city with a remarkable cultural history, many attractions and a dazzling nightlife.

Choosing to study at the University of Antwerp is your first step to an international adventure.

As you prepare for your studies at our university, the questions you face may seem endless. “Where do I go when I arrive? What do I need to know about residence permits, health insurance or safety rules?”

With this guide we aim to answer these questions to help make your transition as smooth and informed as possible. If you read this guide carefully, you will find answers to many of your questions.

We hope that your stay at the University of Antwerp will be an interesting and rewarding experience for you. We are looking forward to meeting you soon!

# Welcome to the University of Antwerp!

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# ▶ Belgium

“Bruges canals, Antwerp fashion, decadent chocolate, mussels and chips, belfries and castles, crazy carnivals, Tintin and Trappist beers... how could anyone call Belgium boring?!”

*Lonely Planet*

Belgium is one of the smaller countries in Europe, with a population of around 11 million, making it one of the most densely populated countries in the world. Yet, for such a small country, Belgium has a staggering amount of beautiful historic cities, fine restaurants and culture. Its small size also makes it very easy to travel around and to visit the neighbouring countries, like Holland, France, Germany and the UK. Of course, you will get introduced at your arrival to the goings-on in Belgium and Antwerp, but here are already some facts to get acquainted with your new home.

## Language

Belgium's system of government can be complicated but the main thing you need to know is that it has three official languages and none of them is called Belgian. While Dutch (or Flemish) is the language spoken in Flanders, the country's northern half, French rules from Brussels southwards. And then there's Eupen-Malmedy, a small region in the east where German is still the predominant language. It would all sound pretty daunting if it weren't for the fact that most Belgians generally speak good English.

## Food & drinks in Daily Life

The Belgians are real bon vivants and enjoy good food, drinks, and company. With so many influences among its current varied population, it is not surprising that the Belgians have a passion for food and cooking. You will find many cosy restaurants with fine food and drinks. We love the Burgundian lifestyle and we like to take our time, count at least 2-3 hours for dinner.

The national drink is beer. They say that you can drink a Belgian beer every day for 4 years and never have the same beer twice. The exact number of all different kinds of beers is unknown, but there should definitely be at least more than 1000 original beers brewed in Belgium and every single Belgian beer has its own special glass. The local beer of Antwerp is amber-colored and is called “Bolleke Koninck”.

Belgian chocolates, waffles and fries are internationally renowned. Besides the regional specialties, such as “waterzooi” from Ghent or “tarte au riz” from Verviers, you can try out national classics like “stoverij” or “tomates crevette”. Vegetarians & vegans can easily find good alternatives and immigration has ensured a diversity of “ethnic” restaurants and is gradually changing the eating habits of the residents in culturally mixed areas.

## Weather and Climate

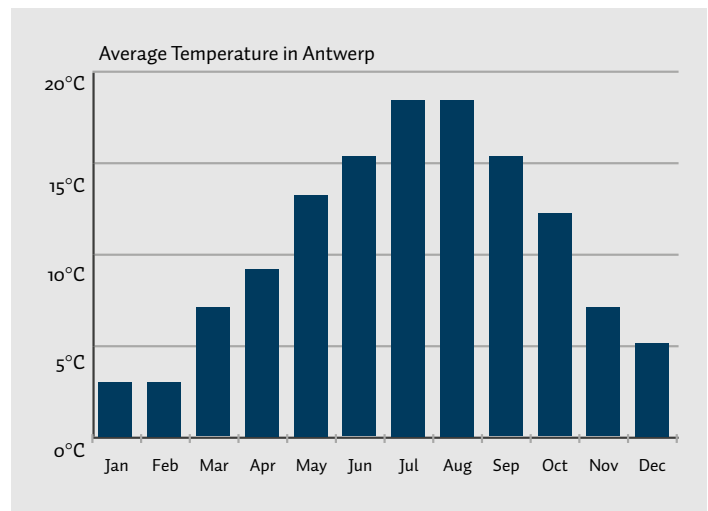
Antwerp may not be the most exotic destination with regard to its climate, but once a few rays of sun hit the city, we drag out the furniture and put on our sunglasses. Having a beer on a terrace, and observing people is one of our favourite activities and we do it as early as February.

On average the warmest month is August and the coolest is January.

Arriving in September you will still enjoy the late summer sun and eventually see the colored leaves falling down the trees during Autumn.

Winters can be cold, with frequent rain, and a small chance of snow.

During spring and early summer the days lengthen with the sun setting at 10 PM.



## GOOD TO KNOW

### Tipping isn't mandatory

Contrary to social custom in other countries, neglecting to tip your waiter in Belgium doesn't automatically make you a monster. Belgian servers earn living wages, so while tipping remains a kind thing to do, it's not required. Usually, people will reserve it for occasions when they feel the service was particularly delightful.





Studying in Antwerp?  
Great idea! The city goes to great lengths to make Antwerp the best and most welcoming city for 30,000 students arriving from all over the world every year!

The student neighbourhood is a stones-throw from the historic city centre and the main shopping street, Meir. The best bars, picturesque façades and excellent restaurants make this the neighbourhood to see and be seen in. There's definitely something for everyone in this neighbourhood, bar hopping or dancing the night away, the choice is yours!

## ▶ City of Antwerp

### Metropolis with a small-town sentiment

As a student, you will find yourself among the 500,000 and more inhabitants of the city. A rich, diverse group consisting of more than 174 nationalities. Antwerp is a cosmopolitan city, but with a small-town sentiment. Everything is within reach and easily accessible.

### Creative city

Antwerp breathes creativity. Names such as Rubens, Tuymans and Raf Simons resonate here. You walk here from one architectural gem to another. And let the Antwerp diamond district amaze you with its diamond cutters, jewellery designers and goldsmiths.

**This is Antwerp** is an online platform that will keep you up to date about hidden hotspots & hangouts, selected and approved by Antwerp locals. You can check out their calendar and in their monthly magazine you can find a selection of activities and events.

Information about must-sees and must-do's:

[www.visitantwerpen.be/en](http://www.visitantwerpen.be/en)

Experience Antwerp as a local:

[www.spottedbylocals.com/antwerp/](http://www.spottedbylocals.com/antwerp/)

Check out Antwerp with a local guide:

[www.likealocalguide.com/antwerp](http://www.likealocalguide.com/antwerp)

### Travelling to Antwerp

The university of Antwerp does not provide airport pick up because the city is easily accessible by **train, car and bus**. Are you under 26? Then check out the **special public transport rates**.

### Jump on those student/-26 discounts

Tons of museums, exhibit spaces, and public institutions will charge students and/or anyone under 26 significantly less. Make sure to have your student card or ID on you when museum-hopping to experience the work of Magritte, Rubens, and other iconic Belgians at a bargain.

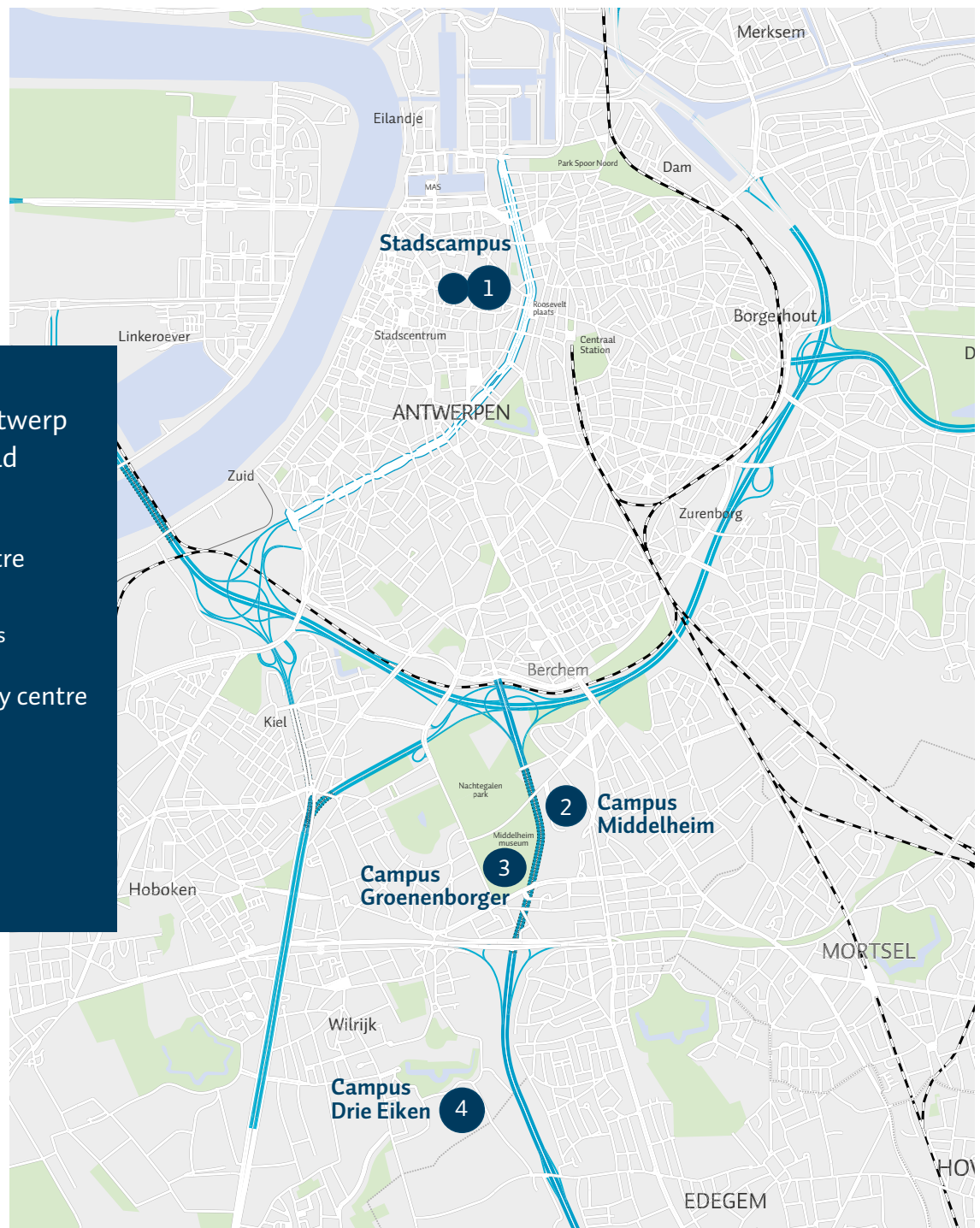
## ▶ Pre-arrival information

### Introduction to the University of Antwerp

The University of Antwerp is a research university where pioneering, innovative research is conducted at an international level. Research and education are closely linked. Educational innovation is a constant focus, and special care is also taken to welcome and guide each of the 21,000 students spread across our nine faculties.

The University of Antwerp is not an island: we build bridges to secondary education, to industry and, by extension, to society as a whole. With over 5,000 members of staff, the University of Antwerp is one of the most important employers in Antwerp, Flanders' largest city.

We are committed to achieving excellence in education and research and are consistently ranked in top 25 of the world's 250 young universities.



The University of Antwerp has 9 Faculties spread over 4 campuses

located in the city centre

1 Stadscampus and faculty of design sciences

located outside the city centre

2 Campus Middelheim

3 Campus Groenenborger

and located in Wilrijk

4 Campus Drie Eiken



## Stadscampus (City Campus) in the city centre

### Faculty of arts

History  
Philosophy  
Linguistics & Literature  
Applied Language studies

### Faculty of Law

### Faculty of Social Sciences

### Faculty of Business and Economics

## next to City Campus, in the city centre

### Faculty of Design Sciences

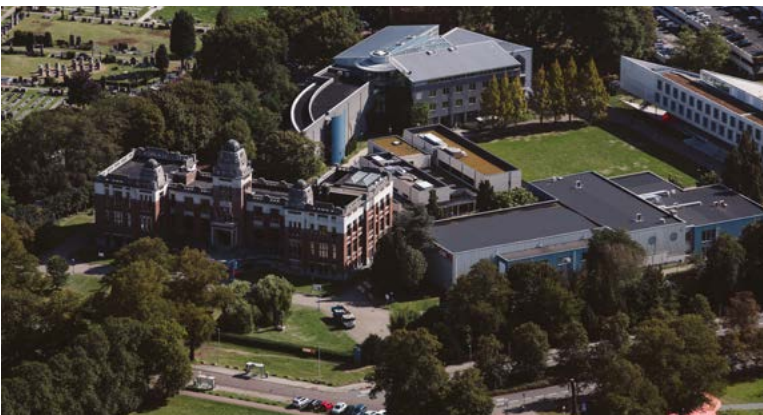
Architecture  
Interior architecture  
Product Development  
European Project Semester  
Conservation & Restoration  
Conservation of Monuments and Sites  
Urban design and Spatial Planning

## Campus Groenenborger

### Faculty of Sciences

Bio-engineering  
Biology  
Chemistry  
Computer Sciences  
Physics  
Environmental Sciences

### Faculty of Applied Engineering



## Campus Middelheim

### Faculty of Sciences

Computer Sciences  
Mathematics  
Physics



## Campus Drie Eiken

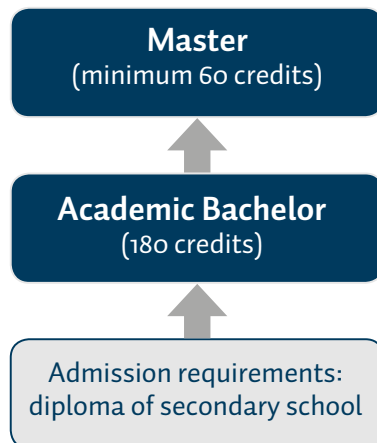
### Faculty of Pharmaceutical, Biomedical and Veterinary Sciences

### Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences

Medicine  
Rehabilitation Sciences & Physiotherapy

## The Academic system and the Examinations

Higher Education in Flanders has adopted the Bachelor-Master structure. A 3-year undergraduate cycle leads to a Bachelor's degree (180 ECTS European Credit Transfer System), followed by a 1- or 2-year graduate cycle (60 or 120 ECTS) leading to a Master's degree.



The academic year runs from the end of September to June and is divided into 2 semesters. Each semester comprises 13 weeks of lecturing, concluded by a 4-week examination period. July to September is generally a lesson-free period, but the academic and administrative staff continue to work, and some courses are provided in this period.

### Examinations

Students are normally allowed to take an **examination** for a course twice a year. First session examinations are held in January and June, at the end of each term. Students are automatically registered for the semester examinations. Second session examinations (i.e. resits) take place at the end of August and at the beginning of September. Students who wish to take resits have to register at the appropriate departmental secretary's office.

Flanders has a tradition of **oral examinations**, often with written preparation. In some departments traditional exams are supplemented by continuous assessment of students' participation in class or by essays or presentations. The assessment method of each subject is described in the course catalogue.

International students may be offered **different methods of evaluation** i.e. assessment based on written work (an essay), continuous assessment or examinations in a foreign language (French, English, or German). However, you should consult with each individual lecturer at the beginning of the semester.

### Grading system

The Flemish academic grading system is based on a mark between 1 and 20. A mark of 10 or more represents a "pass", in which case credits are granted. Less than 10 means "fail".

- $\geq 17$ : Greatest distinction (Maxima cum laude)
- 15-16: Great distinction (Magna cum laude)
- 13-14: Distinction (Cum laude)
- 10-12: Satisfaction (Pass with credit)
- $< 10$ : Fail

### Grading table

The University of Antwerp publishes the **grade distribution tables per faculty** and for the university as a whole, this in order to ensure transparent and coherent info on the performance of individual students. The grade distribution tables are based on all passing grades of 2 academic years.

## GOOD TO KNOW

Here are some tips for everyday student life:

### Professor

- Always address the lecturer as 'Professor' as a sign of respect
- Lecturers are very approachable: don't be scared to ask questions at the end of each lesson, stop by his/her office, send an email,...

### Presence in lessons

- Not always required, but desirable
- Required for continuous assessment

### Academic quarter

- Don't panic when a lecturer is slightly late. If he/she hasn't arrived 15 minutes after the normal start of the class, you can leave.



## ► Preparation for your stay - checklist

- Student Visa**  Not all students have to apply for a visa so check if you need a visa first. If you need a visa, keep in mind that for some countries, approval by the Belgian authorities can take up to three months or longer. Make sure you start the **visa application** procedure well in advance! Do not travel to Belgium on a tourist visa unless you plan to stay for less than three months.
- Insurance & Health care**  Prepare your travel insurance, **health insurance**,... and bring your documents with you.
- Student accommodation**  If you are registered for one semester you can request **accommodation** in your application in mobility online. If you are registered for a full academic year you can search for student accommodation on **Kotweb**.  
  
For additional questions on your student accommodation or your rental agreement please write to **[internationalstudenthousing@uantwerpen.be](mailto:internationalstudenthousing@uantwerpen.be)**.
- Survival on Arrival – Dutch course**  A couple of days before the start of the orientation days you can participate in the **survival on arrival Dutch course**. Make sure you register in time for this course since the seats are limited.

## ► Upon arrival - checklist

- Housing**  Once you arrive in Antwerp the first thing you do is contact your landlord and settle into your room. In case you don't have housing yet when you arrive, you can book yourself into a student hostel for a couple of days and start your search. In case you need help you can contact the housing office of the University of Antwerp at **[internationalstudenthousing@uantwerpen.be](mailto:internationalstudenthousing@uantwerpen.be)**.
- Registration at the university of Antwerp**  Your acceptance as an exchange student in Mobility online automatically means that you are registered at the University of Antwerp. The details from your application file and your passport picture will be used to create your student card. Please double check the details in your application (name, date of birth,..) to make sure we have the right data for your registration.  
  
We will hand over your student card, and login details at the start of the orientation days. You can access all student services with these details, access to the student restaurant, wifi, Blackboard, SisA, etc...
- Orientation days**  **The orientation days** are the official start of the academic year for you. During these two days we will provide you with all the information you need to successfully start your studies at UAntwerp. These days are mandatory so please make sure you arrive on time.
- Registration at the city of Antwerp**  Students from the **EER staying for longer than 1 semester** and **students who need a visa to come to Belgium** have to apply for a **residence permit** from the city of Antwerp. The University will help you to apply for the residence permit, and you will get more information during the orientation days on the process. You can already take a look at the website to check what documents are required from you.



## ▶ Student services

### Digital tools

before the semester starts, you will receive your logins by e-mail. These login details will grant you access to a **number of digital tools** of the University of Antwerp.

- ✔ **Wifi**  
Students have free access to wifi at the University of Antwerp.
- ✔ **Webmail**  
You will receive an UAntwerp email address (First name.Last name@student.uantwerpen.be). Please check your emails on a regular basis, all official communication will be done via this email address.
- ✔ **Blackboard**  
This is your electronic learning environment. All the courses you have enrolled in are listed on Blackboard. Lecturers can upload information about their course, the PowerPoint presentation used during lectures, and so on.
- ✔ **SisA**  
SisA is the student information system of the University of Antwerp where you can consult your study programme, grades, class schedule and most importantly register for your courses as soon as you arrive in Antwerp. The manual is available on the website of the **helpdesk**, and you will be informed on how to use SisA upon arrival in Antwerp.

### Libraries

Each campus has **its own library**. This facility can be used to study, do research, group work, make copies or scans or print.

At the beginning of each semester, during the orientation days, we offer you the opportunity to follow a guided tour in the library of the stadscampus (city centre). You will be shown around and will learn how to use all its facilities.



### Language courses

The University's Language Centre **Linguapolis** organizes various intensive language courses at the beginning of each semester and during the academic year. To enroll in these courses, you will have to pay a tuition fee. UAntwerp students can also sign up for online language courses via **Altissia**. You will receive more information on these language courses upon your arrival.

### Student restaurants komida

With **komida**, the University of Antwerp's student restaurants, you're in the right place for tasty, healthy meals with a sustainable twist at student-friendly prices. Every campus has a restaurant catering to students.

### Student Council

Finally, the university also has an advisory board of students to defend the interests of the students. If you have any issues regarding your professors, courses or your examinations during your stay, you can reach out to them at [studentenraad@uantwerpen.be](mailto:studentenraad@uantwerpen.be)



## ▶ Financial matters

### Cost of living

The cost of living depends on various factors. To have an idea of your expenses, we advise students to draw up a financial plan beforehand. Here are some **indications** which will allow you to calculate your own budget. We differentiate between the cost of studying, which is a direct consequence of your actual studies (college material, housing and transport), and the cost of living, which always arises regardless of the situation (food, leisure)

### Banking

Holders of a European bank card should have no problem to make payments or withdraw money in Belgium. If you use a non-European bank card you might be subject to extra charges, check with your current bank at home about this. If necessary, you can open a bank account upon your arrival in Antwerp.

### Student jobs

Do you want to earn a bit extra during your stay in Antwerp? **Here** you can find more information on the possibility to look for a student job. Keep in mind that finding a student job is not easy if you don't speak Dutch.

### Official letters and mails

Do not ignore official letters and emails, but read these carefully. If the content of the letter or email is not clear, you can contact the International Relations Office to help clarify it.

## ▶ Student life in Antwerp

### Transport between campuses

It's easy to get around in Antwerp. If you need to travel between campuses, it might be useful to [check out the information on the different means of transport](#).

### Sport & Culture

The Culture Service and Sport Service of the Antwerp University present you a combined offer of culture and sports in one affordable package: [MOVE UAntwerpen](#).

This pass gives you access to the recreational and competitive sports program. Access is also guaranteed to an extensive cultural program organized by the Rubi – The Cultural Factory.

### Student organizations & activities for international students

During the academic year you can find all kinds of activities, like sport and culture, but also [free lectures and debates](#), fairs, ... We will keep you informed as much as possible by email and Facebook (the Facebook group for exchange students). But you can always keep an eye on [the university calendar](#) as well.

If you are looking for a fun way to get involved in the student life and meet new people, you can also join one of the University of Antwerp's student associations. [A complete overview of all associations can be found online](#) and below you can already read about the organisations who are happy to welcome international students.

#### ESN

[Erasmus Student Network or "ESN"](#) is without a doubt the most popular student association for international students. The main goal of these local students is to get you involved in the great mix of cultures, traditions and encounters that Erasmus and exchange stands for. Therefore they organise a range of activities to show you the city and other places, to meet other students and have fun together. They are ready to welcome you from the start and organise an ice breaking week at the start of each semester to embrace all international students.

Upon arrival they will inform you about their events, their members and you'll get the chance to subscribe and ask questions.

#### DWARS

Even if most articles are in Dutch, you are very welcome to join the University's monthly student magazine. You can find some [examples from former international students here](#). It's a nice way to meet local students and share your experience or thoughts about education, society and culture!

#### Antwerp University Choir (UKA)

The first rehearsal of [the Antwerp University Choir](#) took place on March 13, 1989, and ever since the "UKA" has gathered every week to play all kinds of choral music in a playful way. Furthermore, they are always very enthusiastic to receive new students at the start of every semester to sing along at their weekly rehearsal. You can [check out previous concerts here](#).

### STAN

Besides the local students organisations, you can always turn to [GATE15](#), where [STAN](#) is located. This service of the city of Antwerp is designed to guide all students in Antwerp during their studies, in every possible way. During the Orientation Days we will show you the way to their beautiful building at the city centre and there you will find out everything about what they do to support student life in Antwerp.



## ▶ Safety and emergency

Antwerp is a safe city, but as in every metropolis it is advised to take some precautions. Here are some recommendations:

### When travelling

- Your travel documents and passport are important, so make a scan and/or photocopy of all pages of your passport with your personal data, dates of issue and expiry, visa and store this separately (keep a copy in an online account).
- Carry small amounts of cash. It is preferable to retrieve money locally with a credit card or a European bank card.
- Keep a close eye on your luggage, backpack, laptop and handbags when travelling. Train stations and airport bus terminals (e.g. Brussels South Station, Antwerp Central Station) are reported to be targets of well-organized thieves diverting unsuspecting travelers.
- Lock your bicycle: use the wheel lock + connect the frame to a fixed object with a good quality lock.

### At the university

The University of Antwerp campuses, either located in the city centre or in the green suburbs, are open to all. You do not need a badge to enter the buildings.

Do not make it easy for thieves:

- carry your wallet with you at all times;
- don't leave your bag unattended (in the office, in lecture room, in reading room, in the car...);
- don't leave your laptop in the lecture hall or reading room.
- use the lockers to put away your valuables (free of charge). Lockers are located in front of the library entrance at campuses CST/CDE/CGB and are available during opening hours of the library.

## What to do in case of an emergency?

### In need of immediate urgent intervention:

✓ Police intervention   ✓ Fire brigade   ✓ Medical intervention   → General number: **112**

### Emergency numbers

✓ On campus   → General number: **6666**  
When using (international) cell phone: +32/3 265 6666

#### The evacuation procedure:

- Call 6666 or +32/3 265 6666
- Leave the building immediately
- Do not re-enter to pick up forgotten things
- Assembly at indicated points per campus
- Follow the orders of the persons in charge

The evacuation procedure, the assembly points and exact description of your location are posted in lecture halls and hallways.

When calling mention your exact location.

### Emergency numbers

- ✓ Outside the campus
- For reporting non urgent issues and intervention: call the police  
De Blauwe lijn: +32/800 123 12  
deblauwelijn@politie.antwerpen.be

Always report theft and crime  
to the local police.

## Usefull contacts @ UAntwerpen

You can find a lot of answers to your questions in the [FAQ](#) for Erasmus and exchange students.

You might still have academic questions related to your study programme, your course schedule or your learning agreement e.g. “where do you have to go on the first day of class?”, “what should you do if there is a time overlap in your course schedule?” “what about the registration of my courses?” These are all questions that can only be answered by [the international coordinator of your faculty](#) here at the University of Antwerp.

If you have non-academic related questions you can consult the scheme below to find out who you can contact.

