

# GETTING STARTED/ BRUSSELS

*Information for starting your studies at  
the Brussels School of International Studies*



A low-angle photograph of the Atomium structure in Brussels, Belgium, featuring its iconic silver, spherical nodes connected by white tubes against a clear blue sky. The spheres are highly reflective, mirroring the sky and surrounding environment.

# CONTENTS

## **Before you arrive**

Four steps to register as a student	4
Prepare for life in Brussels	5
Prepare for your studies	8

## **After you arrive**

On arrival in Brussels	13
Welcome Week	14
Living in Brussels	16
Studying at BSIS	19
Leisure and support facilities	23
Key dates and contacts	24
Checklist	25

# WELCOME



**The Brussels School of International Studies (BSIS) was established in 1998, as an integral part of the University of Kent. It is a unique place, in which students from over all over the world get together to study international affairs at an advanced level in one of the most vibrant diplomatic cities on the globe; host to the European Union, NATO and dozens of other international organisations.**

BSIS is grounded in an interdisciplinary spirit. Our MA and LLM courses combine subjects from International Relations, Political Science and Law, but also Economics and History. We offer you an opportunity to specialise in two subject areas, granting your degree a strong profile.

Our teaching philosophy is highly interactive, based on active participation and autonomous thinking. We prefer you to think with us and to enter into debate, rather than being passive consumers of knowledge. BSIS has recently moved to new premises, where we have even better facilities to engage in teaching and learning at the highest level.

As a student you will find yourself in a very international community that's small enough to make you feel at home and give you the feeling of personal attention. This guide provides some basic information which helps you to make a smooth start and to settle in as a resident of Brussels. I look forward to giving you a warm welcome at BSIS.

**Professor Jeremy Carrette**

Dean for Europe, University of Kent's European Centres







## BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

Once you receive confirmation of your place at Kent, you can start preparing for student life. From registering as a student to checking out the local area, the following pages are a guide to what you can do before you arrive.

An important priority is the process of registering as a student (see p4). Some students need to apply for a visa (see p5) – a process that should be started as soon as possible. Another good tip is to check out the local areas with a view to its accommodation (see p6). This will make the process easier once you arrive. Some students also like to prepare for their studies by reading a few introductory texts in international studies (see p8 for suggestions from BSIS academics).

If you would like a student perspective, you can also consult the Brussels Survival Guide, which is edited by our student body and is available on the Getting Started web pages.

# FOUR STEPS TO REGISTER AS A STUDENT

Once you've met your offer requirements, you need to complete enrolment. Before you arrive, you will need to decide how you will fund your studies and arrange your fee payments. These four steps will guide you.

## Step one: Wait for your 'How to Enrol' email

We'll let you know when you can begin the enrolment process. Look out for this email in your applicant portal in-tray. If you have been made a conditional offer of a place, you will need to meet any conditions placed upon your offer before enrolling.

Please email the Admissions Officer at [bsisadmissions@kent.ac.uk](mailto:bsisadmissions@kent.ac.uk) if you are unsure about any of your offer conditions.

## Step two: Complete enrolment online

The enrolment process should take no more than ten minutes and is simply confirmation of your details and provision of information we require in order to register you as a student. As part of the enrolment process, you will be prompted to upload a passport-style photograph.



### Your photograph MUST:

- be in colour
- be head and shoulders only
- be on a white background
- not include any filters
- show your whole head (do not crop).

Please ensure your photograph is clear as it will be on your KentOne (student ID) card for the duration of your studies at Kent.

## Step three: We will register you remotely

We will proceed with your remote registration once you have successfully enrolled online. You will receive a confirmation email once complete. The email will also advise how to activate your Kent IT account. This gives you an email address and allows you to access the University's intranet and library resources.

## Step four: Payment of fees

Full details on how to pay your fees can be found in the Brussels Student Finance handbook at: [kent.ac.uk/brussels/handbook/brusselsfinance.pdf](http://kent.ac.uk/brussels/handbook/brusselsfinance.pdf)

The registration process is completed on arrival at BSIS, see p14 for details.



# PREPARE FOR LIFE IN BRUSSELS

## From visa and travel arrangements to planning a budget, here's what to do before you arrive.

### Visas and immigration

If you require a visa to study in Belgium, you must apply as early as possible. For advice on this process, please contact your local Belgian consulate: [diplomatie.belgium.be/en/services/travel\\_to\\_belgium/studying\\_in\\_belgium/](http://diplomatie.belgium.be/en/services/travel_to_belgium/studying_in_belgium/) or refer to the information sent with your offer.

### Where to stay on arrival

We recommend [booking.com](http://booking.com) as a useful source of information for finding hotels or hostels. Airbnb provides a huge range of places to stay for a variety of budgets, or you might try your luck via couchsurfing. Current or former students can provide advice, or even a spare room!

### Health insurance

Accidents can happen and it's crucial that you have health insurance to avoid unnecessary and costly expenses. Make sure that you are covered for the period of time that you are studying in Brussels. See [kent.ac.uk/brussels/courses/terms-dates](http://kent.ac.uk/brussels/courses/terms-dates) for dates.

For non-EU citizens, you have two options. Your current health provider may be able to cover you for all, or part, of your stay (check the terms and conditions to find out exactly what you are entitled to).

Alternatively, you can register with one of the health insurers (mutualités) in Belgium on arrival. Bear in mind that some mutualités may have a short waiting period to enrol. One of the largest mutualités is Partena – [partena.be](http://partena.be). We will provide information on registering with a health insurer in Welcome Week.

Please note that all foreign residents are required by Belgian law to have health insurance.

We would recommend arranging some temporary travel insurance to cover you while waiting for local cover. EU citizens are covered for health insurance for the duration of their studies with use of the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) card. You must obtain this before you move to Belgium. Please see [ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=559](http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=559).

### Students with disabilities

The Student Support and Wellbeing Service (based on the Canterbury campus) co-ordinates support and guidance for students with disabilities. If you have a disability for which you require support, please make sure that Student Support is aware of this before your arrival in Brussels. See [kent.ac.uk/student-support](http://kent.ac.uk/student-support) for information and contact details.

### Plan your budget

The costs of living in Brussels can vary enormously depending on which area (commune) you choose to live in, the type of accommodation you choose, and your lifestyle. Our estimates are based upon a student living modestly in a decent neighbourhood:

- accommodation: €400–€800 per month including utilities.



CONTINUED OVERLEAF

## PREPARE FOR LIFE IN BRUSSELS (CONT)

A room (sharing a bathroom and kitchen with others) costs around €400–€550 in either Ixelles or Etterbeek communes, both of which are close to the University. Some students pay €800–€900 per month for a one bedroom apartment in Ixelles or Etterbeek communes

- food: €150 per month if you cook for yourself
- studying materials: around €10 per month for photocopying and printing during the teaching terms; no more than €300 for textbooks for the entire year
- mobile phone: costs depend on the kind of subscription you take out. You should expect to pay €10–€20 for your mobile phone per month; more if you make international calls
- public transport: most students choose to live within walking distance of BSIS.

*“Applying for a visa was a lot easier than I expected. I contacted the Belgian embassy in my country and they provided me with all the paperwork to put in an application. It took a while to come through but I got my visa in good time and I was able to travel to Brussels to look for accommodation before my classes started. My advice? Apply early!”*

**Chris Heim (USA)**  
MA International Relations



Otherwise, a monthly public transport subscription for Société des Transports Intercommunaux de Bruxelles (STIB) costs €49 if you are older than 25 (details correct as of July 2021). For more details, please check [stib.be](http://stib.be)

- health insurance: most students are covered by the insurance they take in their home country. If you sign up for Belgian health insurance, students from a non-EEA country can expect to pay around €6.50/month. Students with a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) receive free health insurance in the first year and pay €6.50/month from the second year onwards
- social life and other expenses: costs vary depending on how much you like to go out and where you go. We suggest around €150 per month.

Please ensure that you have sufficient funds to cover both tuition fees and monthly living costs. Some students choose to work and study at the same time but the hours you can legally work may be restricted by your visa. Students from outside the EU are only permitted to work 20 hours per week.

### Languages

Brussels is officially a bilingual city (French and Flemish), but English is widely spoken in shops, restaurants, hotels and many other companies. English is also a working language for many organisations and institutions in Brussels. However, living in Brussels gives you the opportunity to immerse yourself in another culture and language.

If you want to gain language skills during your time here, there are several course options available.





More information is given during Welcome Week. Students may choose to learn one of the local languages in Belgium or something else entirely – many choose Chinese or Arabic.

#### For French:

Alliance Française  
alliancefr.be/en/

CVO – the VUB's language school  
cvo-pec.be/

Berlitz – berlitz.be/

#### For Flemish:

Huis van het Nederlands  
huisnederlandsbrussel.be/

CVO – the VUB's language school  
cvo-pec.be/

quefaire.be is an excellent resource if looking for a private teacher.

## Travel to Brussels

### By air

Brussels airport website (also known as Zaventem), includes information on how to get to the city centre by public transport: [brusselsairport.be](http://brusselsairport.be)

A train from the airport to central Brussels will cost around €9.50 (as of May 2021), and takes approximately 20 minutes. There is also an airport bus (Line 12 or 21) which is slightly cheaper and takes you to Place Luxembourg or Schuman. Charleroi airport is located about one hour south of Brussels and is mainly used by low cost carriers such as Ryanair or Wizz Air. It is accessible by train and bus from Brussels: [charleroi-airport.com/en](http://charleroi-airport.com/en)

Taxis to Brussels from Charleroi should be avoided as they are very

costly. A combined train and bus journey is approximately €14.

### By train

If you travel to Brussels by international rail (Eurostar, Deutsche Bahn, Thalys or TGV), you will arrive at Brussels-Midi/Brussels-Zuid. This station has excellent transport connections to the rest of the city by bus, metro or tram and also other cities in Belgium by local train. The SNCB (Société Nationale des Chemins de fer Belges) has timetables and fares on its website: [belgianrail.be/en](http://belgianrail.be/en)

## Transport in Brussels

Local transport in Brussels is operated by STIB (the Société des Transports Intercommunaux de Bruxelles). For network advice and ticket information go to [stib.be](http://stib.be) and click on EN to get information in English.

### Getting to BSIS

See our website at:  
[kent.ac.uk/maps/brussels](http://kent.ac.uk/maps/brussels)

*“I was worried that everyone in Brussels would only speak French or Dutch but soon found out that most people I needed to deal with could speak English too. That was a relief! Sometimes I have to call utility companies and find the automated call systems a bit complicated but most of them do have English options.”*

**Salimah Shamshuddin (USA)**  
MA International Migration

# PREPARE FOR YOUR STUDIES

**For those students who would like to prepare for their studies before they arrive in Brussels, prior reading can be useful.**

If you have no prior specialisation in Political Science, International Relations or International Law, or if it has been several years since you have been in an academic setting, you may want to do some preliminary reading.

The examples below represent books recommended by the School's academics. However, since BSIS takes a highly interdisciplinary approach to international studies, this list is by no means exhaustive.

## MA degrees

- Acemoglu, Daron and James A. Robinson. *Why Nations Fail*. NYC, Crown Publishers, 2012.
- Ashworth, William. *A Short History of the International Economy since 1850*, 4th ed. New York: Longman, 1987.
- Baylis, John and Smith, Steve. *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Brown, Chris. *Understanding International Relations*, 3rd ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Brown, G. & Langer, A. (eds) *Elgar Companion to Civil War and Fragile States*, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar, 2012.
- Castles, Stephen, de Haas, Hein and Miller, Mark J. *The Age of Migration: Fifth Edition*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
- Dunne, Tim, Milja Kurki, and Steve Smith. *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, 4th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Gilpin, Robert and Gilpin, Jean M. *Global Political Economy: Understanding the International Economic Order*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001.
- Greene, R.L. *Debating to Win Arguments: From Aristotle to Obama – Everything you need to know about the art of persuasion*. Penguin Books, 2010.
- Jackson, Robert and Sorenson, Georg. *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Keylor, William R. *The Twentieth-Century World: An International History*, 4th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- de Mesquita, Bruce B. *Principles of International Politics*, 5th ed. Los Angeles and London: CQ Press and Sage Publications Ltd., 2014.
- Miall, H, Ramsbotham, O and Woodhouse, T. *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts*. Cambridge: Polity, 2005.



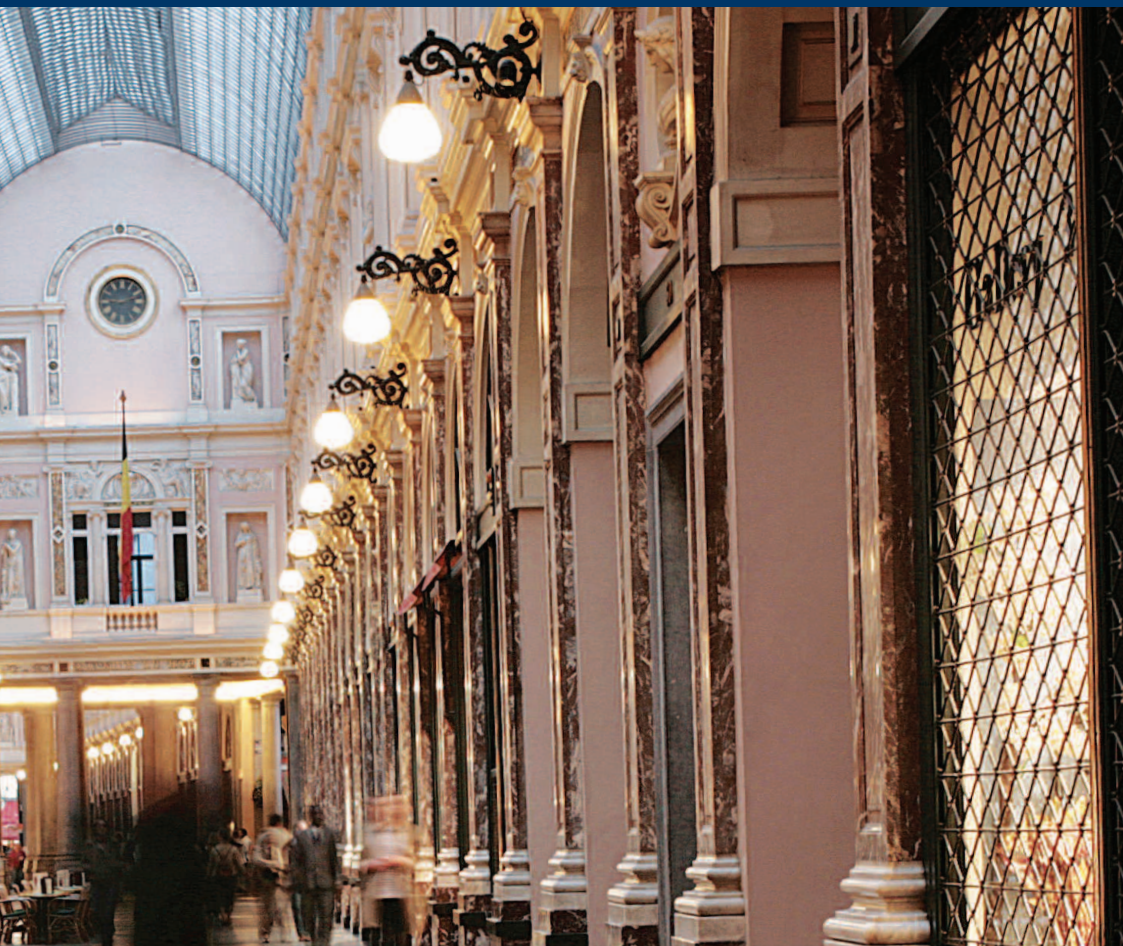
- Münz, Rainer, and Reiterer, Albert. *Overcrowded World?: Global Population and International Migration*. London: Haus Publishing, 2009
  - Nugent, Neill. *The Government and Politics of the European Union*, 7th ed. Houndsmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
  - Nye, Joseph S. *Understanding International Conflicts: An Introduction to Theory and History*, 3rd ed. New York: Longman, 2000.
  - Rathbun, Brian C. *Reasoning of State: Realists, Romantics and Rationality in International Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.
  - Richmond, Oliver P. *The Transformation of Peace*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
  - Schepsle, Kenneth A and Bonchek, Mark S. *Analyzing Politics: Rationality, Behavior, and Institutions*. New York: WW Norton, 1997.
  - Scott, J. *Seeing like a State*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1999.
- LLM degrees**
- De Schutter, Olivier. *International Human Rights Law*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
  - Eslava, Luis. *Local Space, Global Life. The Everyday Operation of International Law and Development*. Cambridge University Press 2015.
  - Kennedy, David. *A World of Struggle*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016.
  - Koskenniemi, Martti. *The Politics of International Law*. Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2011.
  - Lang, Andrew. *World Trade Law After Neoliberalism – Reimagining the Global Economic Order*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
  - Neff, Stephen C. *War and the Law of Nations – A general history*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
  - Picciotto, Sol. *Regulating Global Corporate Capitalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.











## AFTER YOU ARRIVE

Arriving in Brussels is always an exciting time for new students. The following pages guide you through the process of settling in and helps to ensure that your studies go smoothly from the day you arrive.

The first few weeks after arrival are usually very busy. Some of the most important aspects of life as a student are covered in the following pages, such as how to choose your study modules and how to get involved in the School's many activities. Practical information is also provided, such as how to find accommodation, setting up your bank account, finding a doctor and where to shop for household goods.







# ON ARRIVAL IN BRUSSELS

## On arrival and during Welcome Week, you should come to the BSIS office to formally complete your student registration process. Information will be sent to all incoming students ahead of arrival.

Start by taking the steps described on p4 (if you have not already done so). On your first day, BSIS staff will require you to bring your passport and visa (if applicable) and the original diploma/degree certificate that you provided during the application process.

These documents are for verification only and we will not keep them. You then receive a welcome pack and building access card. Student IDs are distributed at the end of Welcome Week. For opening hours of the BSIS office see p19. See [kent.ac.uk/maps/brussels](http://kent.ac.uk/maps/brussels) for travel directions.

## Tuition fee payment

The first instalment of the tuition needs to be paid before the start of term. Students can pay in one or three instalments (Standard version – 90 ECTS), or one or five instalments (Extended version – 120 ECTS).

## The payment should reach the University by the following dates:

- 17.00 on Tuesday 7 September 2021 if you are starting your studies in September
- 17.00 on Friday 7 January 2022 if you are starting your studies in January.

Full details of tuition fee amounts are published online in the Brussels Finance Handbook. The handbook contains details of payment methods, the early fee payment discount, and deferred payment options. See [kent.ac.uk/brussels/handbook/brusselsfinance.pdf](http://kent.ac.uk/brussels/handbook/brusselsfinance.pdf)

**Do ensure you take these deadlines seriously so that your tuition fees are paid on time. Failure to do so can result in substantial penalties being charged and your de-registration from the University.**

## Select your modules

If you are an MA or LLM student arriving at BSIS you need to consider your optional modules. You will have the opportunity to either focus only in the field of your MA or LLM or to combine it with a second area of specialisation.

You can choose your modules from the end of August. The deadline is the Friday of Welcome Week. For optional module choices, you will meet your course director in Welcome Week (see p19 for details).

Please consult our website for more details on study options: [kent.ac.uk/brussels/courses/flexible-study](http://kent.ac.uk/brussels/courses/flexible-study)

To see the modules available for your degree please see our website at [kent.ac.uk/brussels/courses](http://kent.ac.uk/brussels/courses). Further information will be given during Welcome Week.

*“Welcome Week was great. I got all my questions answered – plus the answers to questions I hadn’t even thought of. It was really cool to meet the other students and friendships did form very quickly – probably due to the Brussels Graduate Student Union (BGSU) social events. In the end, after a major influx of information, I was quite tired but definitely excited to be starting my course.”*

**Mia Nilsen (Norway)**  
MA Political Strategy and  
Communication

# WELCOME WEEK

**Welcome Week is the ideal way to begin your studies at BSIS. Not only is it a great chance to meet your fellow students, but it also gives you important information on studying at BSIS, how to make the most of life in Brussels and tips on settling in.**

Attending the programme of events during Welcome Week is an important part of settling in as a student. Events include the following:

## Arrival and Registration

Receive building access cards, welcome pack and drop off your original documents and passport. A social event is organised after this by the student union.

## Welcome

You are officially welcomed to BSIS by the Dean for Europe.

## Administration and practical information

A presentation on the administrative aspects of studying at BSIS. It covers areas such as courses and pathways, the credit framework, lecture schedules, your timetable, how to access your marks and careers advice.

Administration staff and members of the Brussels Graduate Student Union (the elected student body) talk about some of the practical issues of settling into Brussels and the University of Kent, as well as dealing with any queries you have. This session includes information on building access and opening hours, libraries, copying and printing.

## Academic presentations and meetings

Our course conveners discuss what you can expect from our courses and how to tailor your course to your interests. Conveners also discuss what they expect from you as a student.

## Careers and work permits

This is an introduction to the services offered by our BSIS Careers Adviser. These include workshops and individual meetings to maximise your potential to identify and obtain employment in Brussels and elsewhere. There is also a question and answer session on work permits.

## Student Union

The Brussels Graduate Student Union (BGSU) arrange a series of social activities designed to help you meet your fellow students and get a feel for Brussels and what makes it tick.

## Welcome drinks

At the end of the week, we organise an informal opportunity for you to socialise with staff and students and to celebrate the end of Welcome Week!

## More information

Programmes for Welcome Week are generally available in July if you are starting your studies in September, or in November if you are starting your studies in January. See [kent.ac.uk/welcome/brussels](http://kent.ac.uk/welcome/brussels)







# LIVING IN BRUSSELS

## **Brussels is an affordable city with good amenities. With a knowledge of the basics, it doesn't take long to settle in and enjoy your new environment.**

There are lots of activities in Brussels – from academic conferences (of which there are many) to cultural activities such as music festivals, art and design exhibitions, and sporting events.

Belgium is a nation of people who like to dine out and the restaurants on offer reflect that – you can eat food from almost any country in the world here. Belgian, French, Congolese, Thai, Ethiopian,

Mexican, the list goes on! The international vibe in the city can be experienced wherever you go.

Brussels experiences a climate similar to that of the rest of northern Europe. Winters are generally not too cold and the summer is warm with plenty of sunshine. The city has a very cosmopolitan atmosphere and you'll find plenty of outdoor activities, whatever the weather.

## **Accommodation**

Many students find accommodation within one or two weeks of arrival (and sometimes within one or two days). If you have a room for the first few nights in Brussels, this should give you time to assess the market and find something that you are happy with.

The flexibility of the Brussels housing market makes finding accommodation relatively easy. As there are many students and people working as stages (interns), there are numerous vacancies from people who are leaving their apartments and looking for others to take over their leases. Thanks to the internet, you can do a good deal of searching before you even arrive.

The following websites are a few good places to start:

- [appartager.be/?l=1](http://appartager.be/?l=1) (excellent for looking for a room in a house share)
- [easykot.be/](http://easykot.be/) (another good site for house or apartment sharing)
- [thebulletin.be/small-ad-categories/rent-furnished](http://thebulletin.be/small-ad-categories/rent-furnished) (ideal for looking for a fully furnished studio or flat for short or long-term lets)
- [immoweb.be/en/](http://immoweb.be/en/) (better for looking for whole flats for longer lets, but a wide range is available)
- Facebook is an excellent resource for accommodation searches. You can search for potential housemates via the Facebook page [facebook.com/groups/642739649728053](https://facebook.com/groups/642739649728053)

It is much simpler to search for accommodation together than alone, although it does depend what you are looking for. There is also an excellent Facebook group called 'Bxl a louer' where you can find a large number of excellent value apartments or apartment shares.



Once in Brussels, many students have found that simply walking around areas they like is a useful way to find 'to rent' advertisements posted in windows (A Louer/Te Huur).

## Register at a commune

By law, you must register with the authorities at your local commune within eight days of arrival in Belgium, or once you have a fixed address. Registration is not difficult but can take time (commonly up to three months). We advise contacting your commune as soon as possible to set up an appointment. You should expect to take the following documents with you:

- passport
- confirmation of visa
- registration letter from the University
- confirmation of financial support
- extra passport photos
- proof of health insurance.

Individual communes may differ in their requirements, so check before your appointment for the exact documents to bring. Once you have visited the commune, the police will visit your flat to verify your address. Remember to make sure that your name is on the buzzer.

For a list of all 19 communes and their opening hours, see: [brulocalis.brussels/fr/communes](http://brulocalis.brussels/fr/communes)

## Banking

Banking in Belgium is relatively easy and there are a range of banks where you can open an

account. We recommend the ING bank, which has a campus branch at our partner university, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), located across the road from BSIS. Normally, banks will not open an account for you unless you have your Belgian identity card. However, the ING on the VUB has an agreement with the University to allow students to open an account when they arrive. You need to take your offer letter from Kent, passport and have your social security number (or equivalent) to hand.

For more details on ING, see [ing.be/en/retail/](http://ing.be/en/retail/)

## Mobile phones

Having a mobile phone is one of the most important steps of setting up your life in Brussels. There are three major mobile phone providers in Brussels:

- BASE: [base.be](http://base.be)
- Orange: [orange.be](http://orange.be)
- Proximus: [proximus.be](http://proximus.be)

Different providers offer different plans throughout the year and it's worthwhile checking the terms and conditions before signing up to a particular package. In the past, many students have found that Mobistar and BASE offer the most affordable plans but, of course, you may find that Proximus offers a plan more suited to your circumstances.

## Doctors

Finding a doctor is easy in Belgium and many are able to hold consultations in English, French and Dutch (and often

other languages too). You can find doctors by commune at [commissioner.brussels/component/flexicontent/83-practical-daily-life/111-healthcare](http://commissioner.brussels/component/flexicontent/83-practical-daily-life/111-healthcare)

There is also a medical centre on the VUB campus where you can generally see a doctor with or without an appointment. Information is available on the VUB website at [vub.ac.be/english/infofor/prospectivestudents/healthcentre.html](http://vub.ac.be/english/infofor/prospectivestudents/healthcentre.html)

You are expected to pay for your consultation, either in person on the day or by a bank transfer later. The cost of a consultation varies greatly depending on whether or not you have a Belgian healthcare insurer as well as the nature of the consultation and the facilities used in your assessment. See p5 for details of health insurance providers.

## Shopping in Brussels

Don't over-pack! Belgium has excellent shopping facilities and you can usually find everything you need on arrival in Brussels. The main supermarket chains in Belgium are Carrefour; Delhaize; Cora; Colruyt; Lidl; and Aldi.

Weekly markets are held in a number of communes and each Sunday there is a general market held next to the Gare du Midi

# LIVING IN BRUSSELS (CONT)



where you can buy fresh fruit and vegetables, clothes and numerous household items. The following is a list of shops that you may find useful on arrival.

## Furniture

- IKEA  
ikea.be

## Household and appliances

- BLOKKER  
blokker.be
- Casa  
casashops.com
- HEMA  
hema.be
- BRICO  
brico.be
- Media Markt  
mediamarkt.com

## Shopping mall

- City2  
city2.be

## Bookshop

- Waterstones  
Boulevard Adolphe Max  
71, 1000 Bruxelles  
waterstones.com  
This branch stocks many of your required course books: show a student ID card for a discount
- Pele Mele  
Chaussée de Waterloo, 566,  
Ixelles  
An excellent second hand shop selling a vast quantity of English language books.
- amazon.co.uk  
Order your course books online for postal delivery

*“One of my concerns was how to find accommodation. I booked a hostel for the first few days and then teamed up with some other new students to look for something together. In Brussels, notices are put up in windows and so we did a lot of walking around. Within a few days we’d found something. It’s much easier once you’re here.”*

**Aanas Ali (Thailand)**  
LLM International Law with  
International Relations



# STUDYING AT BSIS

## **From how to use the libraries to selecting modules, there are a number of key processes you need to master as a BSIS student.**

During Welcome Week (see p14) you are made aware of how BSIS functions and what you should expect before starting your studies. The administration session explains the key facts, so it's important to attend this session.

### **BSIS opening hours**

BSIS is an urban campus, located in a comfortable and modern building close to the campus of our partner university, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). Our lecture halls, seminar rooms and administration office are located on the second floor of Boulevard Louis Schmidt 2a (Louis Schmidtdaan 2a in Dutch/Flemish).

Lectures and seminars are generally held between 9.00 and 21.00, Mondays to Fridays. Individual times depend on your timetable.

The administration office is open from 9.00 to 17.00, Monday to Friday. If you wish to meet with a member of the administration team, you should email for an appointment. Contact details are available at [kent.ac.uk/brussels/people](http://kent.ac.uk/brussels/people)

Students have access to facilities in the building 24 hours a day, seven days a week. All students will be provided with a building access card on the first day of Welcome Week.

### **Timetables**

For each taught module, you can generally expect to have one lecture and one seminar per week during the semester. However, lectures and seminars for some modules are held fortnightly or in blocks depending on the availability of the module convener. Lecture timetables are revised each semester and are posted at [kent.ac.uk/brussels/courses/term-dates](http://kent.ac.uk/brussels/courses/term-dates)

### **Selecting your modules**

All students attend the module Fundamentals, Dissertation and Research which is designed to

equip you with the skills to access library resources, conduct your own research and write your dissertation.

Each course at BSIS has an academic pathway and the modules available to you will be listed in the course specifications on our website. You should make your choices online prior to arrival. However, if you are unsure about which optional modules to take, you will have a meeting with your course director in Welcome Week to finalise your decision.

Module selection begins at the end of August and the deadline is the Friday of Welcome Week. (See p13 for details.) You may also choose to 'audit' modules in addition to those studied as part of your programme. This means you are able to attend the lectures but are not generally able to attend seminars.



CONTINUED OVERLEAF

## STUDYING AT BSIS (CONT)

If you would like to audit a module, you should discuss it with your programme convener before seeking the approval of the module convener.

### Accessing your student record

Your online student record is an invaluable resource that you should become familiar with as soon as you can. You can access your details, modules and other elements of your records online, as well as monitor deadlines and keep track of any tasks that you are required to complete.

Here you will also find the taught master's handbook which is an invaluable resource for most of your administrative needs. The link is [kent.ac.uk/brussels/handbook/pgt.pdf](http://kent.ac.uk/brussels/handbook/pgt.pdf)

### Moodle

Moodle is a Virtual Learning Environment where your module outlines and readings are held. When you first arrive at BSIS and register, you automatically have access to your compulsory modules on Moodle.

You receive access to your other modules once you have made your selections. It is important to check that you have access to the correct modules on Moodle since it is used to submit your essays at the end of each semester. Go to [moodle.kent.ac.uk/moodle/login/](http://moodle.kent.ac.uk/moodle/login/)



### International Student Conference

The International Student Conference is held in April of each year and is an important showcase of the talents of the postgraduate students at BSIS and students from other universities.

It is an entirely student-led conference and is organised by the BGSU International Conference Chair (see p23) and a committee of assistants. The aim is to give students an opportunity to present their research on one or more topics. There has been a broad portfolio of guest speakers at past events who are experts in their field.

### International Student Dinner

This event is usually held directly after the International Student Conference at a restaurant or hotel in Brussels. Attended by students, academic and administrative staff and all those involved in the conference, this is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the successes of the academic year with fine dining, drinks and dancing.

## Libraries and resources

BSIS students have access to a wealth of resources in Brussels, Belgium, Canterbury and online. The primary sources for your research readings are via Kent's Templeman library (based in Canterbury) – further information about library facilities can be found at [kent.ac.uk/guides/library-services-for-kent-students-at-brussels](http://kent.ac.uk/guides/library-services-for-kent-students-at-brussels)

The libraries of the VUB and the ULB, the Royal Library in Belgium and the Library of the Foreign Ministry of Belgium are all accessible to students and hold some excellent resources. You can also access the European Commission Library, NATO Library, libraries of the National Bank of Belgium and the Ministry of Defence plus other university libraries in Belgium. To take books out of the VUB and ULB libraries, you will need to pay a small membership fee.

During Welcome Week, we will give an overview of how to access resources including e-books and inter-library loans.

## Computing facilities

BSIS has a number of computers for student use. You can use laptops at BSIS using the eduroam Wi-Fi service provider. If you want to print out documents at BSIS you can charge the cost to your account in the administration office. There are also many local copy shops which can provide printing facilities.

BSIS students also have access to the facilities at our partner universities VUB.

## Careers

Our Careers Adviser helps you prepare for the job and internship market as soon as possible after your arrival in Brussels. You are offered weekly career workshops and individual coaching sessions catered to your specific needs. Specific workshops on how to get internships at the European Parliament and Commission are available. You can also schedule individual appointments throughout the course of your studies to make sure you feel confident about your career plan and job applications.

Our coach secures internships that relate to all our courses. Organisations we have placed students with include:

- International Crisis Group
- UNDP's Joint Migration and Development Initiative

- Weber Shandwick
- Hill + Knowlton Strategies
- ICF Mostra
- Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
- Red Cross
- various human rights and environmental NGOs in Brussels and Switzerland.

Many students embark on internships during their time at BSIS. These are usually unpaid, but can be quite time consuming. Bear in mind that a careful balance is required so your studies do not suffer. Some internships depend on you being a registered student at the University, so keep your registration dates in mind when you apply.

## Graduation

Successful graduates are invited to attend a graduation ceremony in November at Canterbury Cathedral in Kent. BSIS staff members usually attend to help you celebrate!

*“At first I was worried about finding my seminar readings but I was quickly reassured. The School organises a library session that introduces us to a great variety of facilities and online resources. That was really useful and made it easier to find what I needed.”*

**Sandrine Lauret (France)**  
MA Political Strategy and Communication





# LEISURE AND SUPPORT FACILITIES

**Students have access to a range of forums set up by fellow BSIS students, as well as sport and leisure facilities offered by our partner universities.**

To socialise with fellow students, you can use all of the bars, cafés and social spaces of our partner universities Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) and Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB). BSIS students are also able to use other campus facilities (see below).

## Sports activities

BSIS students also have access to sporting facilities at both the VUB and the ULB for a minimal charge. These include football (soccer) pitches, a swimming pool and track facilities. Students often tend to use the facilities at the VUB as it is closer to BSIS. Basic Fit is a private health and fitness company offering a range of membership discounts. It is on the VUB campus and has a good selection of aerobic and training equipment. See [basic-fit.be/](http://basic-fit.be/) for details.

Brussels has many gyms and fitness organisations with prices as low as €15 per month. In previous years the BSIS student community has been active in organising football and other sporting events. See [facebook.com/groups/BSIS.sports](https://facebook.com/groups/BSIS.sports) to keep up to date.



## Student forums

Each year, students set up their own forums reflecting their academic interests. Recent forums have included the Churchill Society, the Migration Forum (which organises visits to the International Organisation for Migration, Save the Children and the Red Cross), the Film Society and the International Development Forum (organising visits to development-related institutions and sharing information about professional training and employment opportunities). If you have a particular focus in your field, you're welcome to set up your own forum – the Brussels Graduate Student Union (BGSU) can advise on whether funding is available.

## Brussels Graduate Student Union

The Brussels Graduate Student Union (BGSU) is a self-governing body of graduate students at BSIS which promotes the interests and welfare of its members. Elections

to the BGSU are held with each new intake and include the following positions:

- **President:** chairs meetings and oversees BGSU activities
- **Vice-President:** deputises for the President
- **Treasurer:** manages the BGSU budget and finances
- **Secretary:** minutes BGSU meetings and organises correspondence
- **Social Secretary:** organises social and fundraising events
- **Sports Representative:** organises sports activities for all students
- **Victualler:** organises the annual International Dinner
- **International Conference Chair:** organises speakers and attendance at the International Student Conference
- **Welfare Officer:** provides support for student welfare
- **Academic Officer and Course Representatives:** liaise between students and course conveners on any student concerns.

# KEY DATES AND CONTACTS

## BSIS contact details

Brussels School of International Studies, University of Kent,  
Boulevard Louis Schmidt 2a, 1040 Brussels, Belgium.

T: +32 2 641 1721

F: +32 2 641 1720

Maps and travel directions	<a href="http://kent.ac.uk/maps/brussels">kent.ac.uk/maps/brussels</a>
Administration Office opening hours	Monday to Friday, 9.00-17.00
General queries	<a href="mailto:bsis@kent.ac.uk">bsis@kent.ac.uk</a>
Student Records Administrator	<a href="mailto:bsispgadmin@kent.ac.uk">bsispgadmin@kent.ac.uk</a>
Finance Officer	<a href="mailto:eurofin@kent.ac.uk">eurofin@kent.ac.uk</a>
Admissions enquiries	<a href="mailto:bsisadmissions@kent.ac.uk">bsisadmissions@kent.ac.uk</a>

## Our academic year

Orientation Week for students starting in September	22 September – 24 September 2021
Term 1	27 September – 17 December 2021
Orientation Week for students starting in January	12 January – 14 January 2022
Term 2	17 January – 8 April 2022
Term 3	9 May – 17 June 2022

## University websites

Enrol as a student	<a href="http://kent.ac.uk/welcome">kent.ac.uk/welcome</a>
Payment plans	<a href="http://kent.ac.uk/welcome/brussels/fees.html">kent.ac.uk/welcome/brussels/fees.html</a>
Student Support and Wellbeing Service	<a href="http://kent.ac.uk/studentsupport">kent.ac.uk/studentsupport</a>
Lecture timetables	<a href="http://kent.ac.uk/brussels/studying/term/lecture-schedule.html">kent.ac.uk/brussels/studying/term/lecture-schedule.html</a>
Moodle (module information)	<a href="http://moodle.kent.ac.uk/moodle/login/i">moodle.kent.ac.uk/moodle/login/i</a>
BSIS website for current students	<a href="http://kent.ac.uk/brussels/students">kent.ac.uk/brussels/students</a>

## Local websites

Public transport in Brussels	<a href="http://stib.be">stib.be</a>
Communes in Brussels	<a href="http://brulocalis.brussels/fr/Communes">brulocalis.brussels/fr/Communes</a>
Visa information	<a href="http://diplomatie.belgium.be/en/services/travel_to_belgium/Studeren_In_Belgie">diplomatie.belgium.be/en/services/travel_to_belgium/Studeren_In_Belgie</a>
Doctors by commune	<a href="http://commissioner.brussels/i-am-an-expat/practical-daily-life">commissioner.brussels/i-am-an-expat/practical-daily-life</a>
Doctors at medical centre (VUB campus)	<a href="http://vub.ac.be/english/infoprosperspectivestudents/healthcentre.html">vub.ac.be/english/infoprosperspectivestudents/healthcentre.html</a>
ING bank (on VUB campus)	<a href="http://ing.be/en/retail">ing.be/en/retail</a>
Mobile phone providers	<a href="http://base.be">base.be</a> <a href="http://orange.be">orange.be</a> <a href="http://proximus.be">proximus.be</a>



# CHECKLIST

## Before you arrive

- Complete enrolment – p4
- Remote registration – p4
- Obtain visa (if needed) – p5
- Book a place to stay on arrival – p5
- Arrange health insurance – p5
- Inform us of any disabilities to allow us to provide support – p5
- Plan your budget – p5
- Make your travel arrangements to Brussels – p7
- Pay your first instalment of fees – p13
- Select your modules – p13

## After you arrive

- Complete your student registration and collect your ID card – p14
- Attend the Welcome Week programme – p14
- Find accommodation – p16
- Register with your commune – p17
- Open bank account (if applicable) – p17
- Find a mobile phone provider – p17

This brochure was produced in July 2021. The University of Kent makes every effort to ensure that the information contained in publicity materials is fair and accurate and to provide educational services as described. However, the courses, services and other matters may be subject to change. For the most up-to-date information, and for our terms and conditions, see [www.kent.ac.uk](http://www.kent.ac.uk)

BSIS, University of Kent, Boulevard Louis Schmidt 2a,  
1040 Brussels, Belgium  
T: +32 (2) 641 1721 [www.kent.ac.uk](http://www.kent.ac.uk)

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**Kent**