

Visa Requirements

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2 HOWEST

Howest is a **public** institution.

3 DO YOU NEED A BELGIAN VISA

A number of distinctions are made with respect to nationality. The most important one is that between **nationals of the European Economic Area (EEA)** and **non-EEA nationals**.

3.1 EEA CITIZENS

Students from EEA member states (European Union + Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) **do NOT** need a visa, they may reside in all the other EEA member states.

3.2 NON-EEA CITIZENS

3.2.1 STUDENTS FROM NON EEA MEMBER STATES

Students from non EEA member states **NEED** a **visa** or an authorisation to enter and stay in Belgium.

3.2.2 NON EEA STUDENTS ENROLLED AT A HOME INSTITUTION IN ANOTHER EEA COUNTRY THAN BELGIUM AND WHO ALREADY HAVE A RESIDENCE PERMIT FOR THAT EEA COUNTRY

Non-EEA students enrolled at a home institution in another EEA country than Belgium and who already have a residence permit for that EEA country, don't need to apply for a Belgian visa for an exchange at Howest. Nevertheless Howest will submit a Belgian stay request to the Belgian Foreign Affairs Department for these students.

In order to submit this request, Howest will need the following documents from the students, all in one single pdf, e-mailed to sophie.dewitte@howest.be:

- Copy of your passport
- Copy of a valid residence permit for the entire duration of the mobility, issued by the first EU member state where you are enrolled as a student
- Proof of solvency (proof of grant/funding/livelihood) for the entire duration of the mobility
- Proof of a health insurance that covers the risks in Belgium for the entire duration of the mobility

If your request has been approved by the Belgian Foreign Affairs Department (usually about 1 month after the submission by Howest), you will receive a notice by e-mail.

Upon arrival in Belgium, then you will need to register at the city hall and submit the following documents in order to legally reside in Belgium for the duration of the mobility:

- The Foreign Affairs notice
- The Howest enrollment certificate that you will receive upon your arrival at Howest
- All the above mentioned documents needed for the stay request (passport, valid residence permit 1st EU country, solvency and health insurance).

Please note that Howest cannot be held responsible for the completeness/quality of your data/documents when submitting your stay request.

3.3 CHINESE CITIZENS

Chinese students who want to study in Flanders at universities or universities of applied sciences need an APS certificate issued by DAAD Beijing, with whom Flanders has a cooperation agreement, unless if there is a cooperation agreement between the Flemish institution and the Chinese home institution. In that case the student is exempted from the APS Procedure.

3.4 EXCEPTIONS – SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Special arrangements apply for Switzerland while Monaco follows the French regulations.

4 HOW TO APPLY FOR A VISA

You can apply for a visa via [VFS Global](#) or [TLS Contact](#) (i.a. for UK/South Africa residents).

5 WHAT TYPE OF VISA CAN YOU APPLY FOR

As a rule non-EEA students must apply for a visa at the Belgian Consulate or Embassy in your country or in the country where you legally reside, and not the public authorities in Belgium itself.

If there is no Belgian consulate or embassy in your country, you may submit your application to the Belgian consulate or embassy in a neighbouring country.

The contact details of all Belgian embassies and consulates worldwide can be found [here](#).

5.1 VISA TYPE C (SHORT-STAY)

- Stay < 90 days
- Also known as a Tourist Visa Schengen.
- This visa type allows you to travel freely in the Schengen Area for maximum 90 days, not outside the Schengen Area.
For **EU countries that are not part of the Schengen area**, a stay in their territories is governed by individual visa requirements for the given foreign national's country of origin.
- Never enter Belgium on a tourist visa if you intend to stay longer than 90 days or three months. This means this visa type C is not valid if you come for a Howest semester programme!

5.2 VISA TYPE D (LONG-STAY) = STUDENT VISA

- Stay > 90 days
- Also know as "Authorisation for Provisional Stay".
- In case of a visa type D single entry:
 - This visa type allows you to travel freely in the Schengen Area during the first 3 months of your stay.
 - A residence permit is needed to travel outside the Schengen Area and in the Schengen Area after the first 3 months of your stay.For **EU countries that are not part of the Schengen area**, a stay in their territories is governed by individual visa requirements for the

given foreign national's country of origin.

▪ In case of a visa type D multiple entries:

- This visa type allows you to travel several times between your home country and Belgium as long as your visa is valid.
- It also allows you to travel freely in the Schengen Area during the first 3 months of your stay.
- A residence permit is needed to travel outside the Schengen Area (unless if you travel to your home country) and in the Schengen Area after the first 3 months of your stay.

For **EU countries that are not part of the Schengen area**, a stay in their territories is governed by individual visa requirements for the given foreign national's country of origin.

- A Visa type D is never a residence permit! You also have to register at the city hall for a residence permit (= A card) within the first 8 days after arrival
-> see chapter 8 'How to apply for a residence permit?'

6 WHAT ARE THE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR A BELGIAN STUDENT VISA (=VISA TYPE D)

As a general rule, authorisation to stay in Belgium for more than 3 months is granted to a foreign student wishing to pursue higher education here, or spend a preparatory year ahead of higher education, as a regular student, in an educational establishment organised, recognised or subsidised by the public authorities, if that student:

- proves that he/she is a **regular student** in a higher education establishment organised, recognised or subsidised by the public authorities (please note that Howest is also a public institution),
- proves that he/she is **not carrying any of the diseases** which might endanger public health, and
- if aged over 21, produces a document stating that he/she has **no convictions** for crimes or offences under common law,
- proves that he/she has **sufficient means of subsistence** ([website under construction, info not available in English](#)) to cover healthcare, living costs, study and repatriation costs.

→ You can proof your means of subsistence by means of

- a sponsor:
In general applies the following calculation for proving the minimum means of solvability:
1738,98 EUR net monthly income of the sponsor
+ monthly minimum amount the student must have at his disposal (**730 EUR/month**)
= in total: **2468,98 EUR net monthly**
- a scholarship
- a financial certificate by Howest after you have deposited a sum of money (730 EUR per month of exchange = 3650 EUR for a semester or 7300 EUR for one academic year) into the bank account of Howest University of Applied Sciences, that you will get back in monthly installments once you are in Belgium.
To request the Financial Certificate, please contact: international.office@howest.be (and add sophie.dewitte@howest.be in cc).
Please note that it can take several weeks in issuing a financial certificate.

More detailed information can be found [here](#) ([website under construction, info not available in English](#)).

7 WHAT DOCUMENTS ARE REQUIRED

When visiting the embassy or consulate you will need the following documents for a visa type D:

- A completed and signed visa application form (in duplicate)
- A travel document in which a visa can be affixed and which is valid for more than 12 months (e.g. a passport)

- Permission to enroll at a public higher education institution (Acceptance Letter)
- Proof that you satisfy the conditions for access to higher education (such as diploma, academic records)
- Proof you can support yourself (sufficient means of subsistence)
- Certificate of good conduct
- Medical certificate
- Valid proof of payment of the administrative fee
- Declaration signed by yourself, certifying that you will leave Flanders (Belgium) upon the completion of your studies
- Recent passport pictures, signed on the back

More information can be found [here](#) ([website under construction, info not available in English yet](#)).

8 HOW MUCH DOES A STUDENT VISA APPLICATION COST

For a visa type D (long-term):

- there is a handling fee of 180 EUR per application
- an extra contribution for administration costs that can vary between 63 euros and 366 euros though most non EU students will need to pay 209 euros.

Detailed information can be found on the website of the [Belgian Federal Public Service for Foreign Affairs](#).

For the administrative fee, see [here](#) ([website under construction, info not available in English yet](#)).

9 HOW LONG DOES THE VISA PROCESS TAKES

Request your visa as soon as possible as it can easily take 2 months in getting your visa!

10 HOW CAN YOU APPLY FOR A RESIDENCE PERMIT

All international students, both EEA and non-EEA, have to register at the city hall within eight days after arrival in Belgium. The local authorities will issue an identity document for a foreign student temporarily living in Belgium (residence permit= A card), which will be available 5 to 6 weeks after registration at the city hall. EEA students will get a paper residence permit for free, non-EEA students will get an electronic residence permit that costs 17,80 euros in Kortrijk/19,30 euros in Bruges.

This document will allow multiple exits/entries in Belgium and it will also show the exact duration of stay. Insurance companies may require it in case of accidents/damage!

Moreover, without this document, a Visa Type D (single entry) will allow you to travel around in the Schengen Area (for a list of the Schengen Countries, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schengen_Area) during the first 3 months since your first day of arrival but if you still want to travel after this period or outside the Schengen Area, you definitely need to have a residence permit in order to re-enter Belgium. The same goes for a D visa with multiple entries (instead of a single entry), but in addition you can travel several times between your home country and Belgium as long as your visa is valid.

The Campus Coordinator of Internationalisation will make you an appointment for registration at the city hall in the first week after your arrival, normally during the Orientation Week. You will receive the appointment info by e-mail.

- ➔ When registering at the city hall, you will need to present the following documents:
- Valid international passport
 - Your long-stay visa for Belgium
 - Passport photo (max 6 months old)
 - Proof of enrolment at Howest
 - A copy of your student accommodation rental contract
 - Proof of health insurance coverage
 - Proof of solvency
 - Personal data form in Dutch (called 'Inlichtingenformulier'): your buddy will help you to complete it during the Orientation Week.
 - 4 recent passport photos

For more information, you can consult the city hall of Kortrijk, Department Foreign Affairs (only available in Dutch):

<https://www.kortrijk.be/producten/buitenlandse-studenten>

The website of the city hall of Bruges is only available in Dutch: <https://www.brugge.be/vreemdelingen-2>.

11 OTHER RESOURCES ABOUT VISA REQUIREMENTS

See also the Study in Flanders web page <http://www.studyinlanders.be/en/preparing-your-stay/checklist/>: Checklist.

<https://dofi.ibz.be/fr/>: *(website under construction, info not available in English yet)*

<http://www.highereducation.be> and

<https://www.studyinlanders.be/practical-information/visa-requirements>

