

VISA REQUIREMENTS

(sources: <https://dofi.ibz.be/sites/dvzoe/EN/Pages/home.aspx>;

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

<http://www.studyinlanders.be/en/preparing-your-stay/visa-requirements/>)

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**.

EEA nationals may reside in all the other EEA member states.

Non-EEA citizens need a visa or an authorisation to enter and stay in Belgium.

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

Chinese students that want to study in Flanders at universities or university colleges need an APS certificate issued by DAAD Beijing, with whom Flanders has a cooperation agreement.

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

BEFORE ARRIVING IN FLANDERS (BELGIUM)

Before you start your studies in Flanders, please visit the Belgian Embassy or Consulate in your country.

Students from EEA member states (European Union + Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) do not need a visa, students from non-EEA member states do need a visa:

Non-EEA students should apply for an Authorisation for Provisional Stay. This type of visa (in Dutch: *Machtiging tot Voorlopig Verblijf*) allows the holder to stay in Belgium for a period longer than three months. This visa is also referred to as Visa Type D. For non-EEA students, the Authorisation for Provisional Stay is also commonly known as student visa.

As a rule you must apply for this 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.

Request your visa as soon as possible as it can easily take up 6 to 8 weeks in getting your visa!

Never enter Belgium on a tourist visa if you intend to stay longer than 90 days or three months.

A Visa type D is never a residence permit! You have to register at the city hall for a residence permit within the first 8 days after arrival.

Principle

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 there, 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 is a regular student in a higher education establishment organised, recognised or subsidised by the public authorities,
- > proves that he is not carrying any of the diseases which might endanger public health, and
- > if aged over 21, produces a document stating that he has no convictions for crimes or offences under common law,
- > proves that he has sufficient **means of subsistence** to cover his healthcare, his living costs, his study and repatriation costs. In general applies the following calculation for proving the minimum means of solvability:

1.156,53 EUR net monthly income of the sponsor (amount of the poverty threshold fixed by Belgium-06/2016)
+ monthly minimum amount the student must have at his disposal (**631 EUR**)
+ **150 EUR per person already dependent** on the sponsor

More detailed information can be found on https://dofi.ibz.be/sites/dvzoe/EN/Application-guides/Pages/The_commitment_that_charge_will_be_taken_Annex_32.aspx and https://dofi.ibz.be/sites/dvzoe/EN/Application-guides/Pages/The_commitment_that_charge_will_be_taken_Annex_32.aspx

Visa types

Stay < 90 days = **Visa type C** (= 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.

Stay > 90 days = **Visa type D** (= Student Visa)

- 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.

When visiting the embassy or consulate you will need the following documents:

- Valid passport (with at least one year's validity remaining)
- Permission to enroll at the higher education institution
- Proof you can support yourself
- Certificate of good conduct
- Medical certificate
- Declaration signed by yourself, certifying that you will leave Flanders (Belgium) upon the completion of your studies
- Recent passport pictures, signed on the back
- Financial support declaration

Visa Application Cost

For a visa type D, there is a handling fee of 180 EUR per application and since March 2015 there is also an extra contribution for administration costs that can vary between 160 euros and 215 euros. Detailed information can be found on the website of the [Belgian Federal Public Service for Foreign Affairs](#).

AFTER ARRIVING IN FLANDERS (BELGIUM)

The regulations for a residence permit in the Howest cities Kortrijk and Bruges differ.

IF YOU STUDY IN KORTRIJK

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), 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 18,70 euros.

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.

➔ When applying for the residence permit at the city hall, you will need to present the following documents:

- Valid passport
- Visa
- Passport photo
- Proof of enrolment at Howest

For more information, you can consult the city hall of Kortrijk, Department Foreign Affairs.

Also see their website:

<http://www.kortrijk.be/sites/kortrijk/files/assets/samenleving/integratie/Kortrijk%20v%20anderstaligen%20ENGELS-scherm.pdf>

IF YOU STUDY IN BRUGES

EEA students do not need to be registered at the city hall, contrary to non-EEA students who do have to be registered 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), which will be available 5 to 6 weeks after registration at the city hall. Be aware that you are required to pick it up at the city hall (it costs 20,20 euros).

A residence permit will allow multiple exits/entries in Belgium. It will also show the exact duration of stay. Insurance companies may require it in case of accidents/damage!

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.

➔ Howest will do this registration for you and will pass your registration file to the Department of Foreign Affairs in Bruges in order to apply for your residence permit. Therefore you will need to send the following documents to Howest/STIP, contact person Pieter.Callewaert@howest.be, within 5 days after the start of the semester:

- Visa
- Proof of long term Health Insurance for your stay in Belgium

➔ Howest will inform you when the residence permit is available at the city hall.

When you go for collection, make sure you take your valid passport, 2 passport photos and 20,20 euros along.

The Department of Foreign Affairs in Bruges is open every working day from 8h30 till 12h.

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