

Student Survival Guide

Everything you need to know before coming to Brussels

Courtesy of the Brussels Graduate Student Union (BGSU)



University of
Kent

Brussels School
of International
Studies

Dear Student,

The beginning of your studies at the University of Kent, Brussels School of International Studies (BSIS), will soon be here! To help you prepare for your arrival in Brussels, this Brussels Survival Guide has been put together by your predecessors and members of the Brussels Graduate Student Union (BGSU), our student representative body here at BSIS and contains valuable information on topics such as housing, commune registration, transportation, and banking. On behalf of the BSIS Office, we hope that you will find this information useful and that this Guide will make the “settling in” process as smooth as possible for you.

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The [Getting Started](#) pages of our website are also a useful source of information for enrolment, registration and finance issues. Please bookmark this site for future use.

We hope this information will be of use to you. If there is anything else that you might need, please don't hesitate to ask and we will be happy to assist you with anything that we can.

We look forward to meeting you soon!

The BSIS Office Team

Dear Fellow Students,

Congratulations on being accepted to the University of Kent's Brussels School of International Studies! On behalf of the BGSU, we'd like to welcome you to the university and to Brussels! In this guide, you will find valuable information regarding your relocation to Brussels. We hope that this helps you in your preparations. The school's administration team as well as staff will be happy to assist you with whatever questions or concerns you have prior to your arrival in Brussels.

Our Welcome Week starts **Wednesday 20 September**, and will cover everything you need to know about your transition to Brussels. We have a lot of activities planned! The week will end with welcome drinks for both current and incoming students, faculty, and staff. Classes then start on **Monday 25 September**. BSIS is not only about getting good grades and writing papers; it is about so much more. It is a chance for you to meet interesting students, make friendships that will last a lifetime and above all to get involved in the student life of our campus through participations in clubs, forums and the BGSU.

The BSIS Graduate Student Union (BGSU) is the student governing body of the school, and was started here at the Brussels School of International Studies in 2001. Historically, it is an English tradition and Graduate Unions can be found on most major campuses across the UK. As any organization we are evolving over time. This past year we have undertaken various reforms to increase legitimacy and efficiency of the BGSU.

This is an exciting time for all. Without your energy, involvement and spirit none of this would be possible. The outline of the BGSU is on the subsequent page including positions you can run for during welcome week! So if you want to get involved in the working of the BGSU, **nominations will occur during welcome week followed by the elections during the first week of classes**. Keep your eye out for announcements!

Our Executives look forward to meeting you in person and wish you much success in your upcoming academic year. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Your Brussels Graduate Student Union (BGSU)

Getting Involved with the BGSU

The BGSU is the student voice at BSIS. Once enrolled as a student, you are automatically a member of the Graduate Union and are welcomed and encouraged to actively participate in matters pertaining to the benefit of the student body and BSIS.

Every term, a group of students are elected who represent and support the needs of the entire student body here in Brussels. These positions are filled on a rolling basis every term and can include:

The President, who represents BSIS students to the University and to Kent Union (Canterbury), and, among others, who holds the overall responsibility to ensure a smooth running of the BGSU;

The Vice-President (VP) who advises the President and who is responsible for communicating over BGSU activities;

The Treasurer, who is responsible for assisting the financial transfers required for BGSU activities and to ensure their compliance to the University's financial rules.

The Social Officer, who deals with and coordinates all social activities initiated and realized in the framework of the BGSU;

The Academic Officer who, in addition of being the liaison between students and the academic staff, supervises extra-curricular academic activities ran at BSIS.

You can also volunteer for other positions, such as becoming the International Conference Chair, or the International Dinner Chair, or leading a discussion group, etc.

Nominations will occur during the first week of class and the elections will occur on the second week.

BGSU Online Communication

A very efficient way to communicate with everyone is through Facebook. Diverse forums are available on Facebook and they will be mentioned to you during Welcome Week. The main group that you will use during the year is called « BSIS Current Students (year) » and is useful to share all relevant information to our community, whether it is internship opportunities, accommodation help, encouragements, or pictures of events. Then specific groups target

specific activities. The official Facebook page of the school is : [BSIS - University of Kent at Brussels](#)

When you will arrive at BSIS you will be introduced to Moodle. This online platform used for your courses and to submit your assignments has also a section reserved to BGSU, where you can find all the relevant information, without needing to register on Facebook. The most important communication is also ensured through official emails coming from bgsu@kent.ac.uk

Hope to talk to you soon on these platforms!

List of First to do

- Please be sure to **KEEP ALL PAPERWORK THAT THE VISA POST GIVES TO YOU WHEN APPLYING FOR YOUR VISA AND BRING IT WITH YOU!** You will need this to register at the commune, get your public transport pass and is sometimes required by your landlord.
- **Phone Number** – From our experience in the search for a house, landlords are more likely to respond to a phone call than an e-mail. Cell phone companies such as Base and Proximus provide affordable “Pay as you Go” which can include unlimited data / texting/ evening and weekend calls when you add a certain amount of credit to your account. There are also great deals on plans when signing a contract at many service providers as well. If you already have a cell phone from home you can unlock it before moving to Brussels and use it here.
- **Bank Account**- the ING on the VUB campus is the **ONLY** bank that will assist you in opening a bank account without a formal address. They have many international students coming at the beginning of the school year. Once your account is open it is best to wire money to your account as **many student have had significant problems with traveller’s cheques**. Wire transfers can take 5 working days to process so make sure the account is set up soon after arriving especially because you will need to open an additional account tied to your landlord for the rental deposit. It is also possible to take cash out from ATM machines from your home account – Make sure you let your home bank know you will be moving to Brussels
- **House Hunting**- This is probably what most of you are anxious about. There are lots of options for accommodations in Brussels and once you have chosen a place landlords are eager to get you settled in quickly- sometimes the same day. Students who end up being unhappy with their accommodation committed to the property before seeing it in person. Many rental properties are advertised by orange Rental signs in the windows. A

nice walk around the area that you would like to live in should provide you with lots of different options. (More information pages 6-11)

Arriving in Brussels

In addition to the Welcome Week organized by the school (see link), you can familiarize yourself with Brussels before arrival and the following websites are a useful starting point before you reach Belgium. Unless otherwise indicated, all websites are available in English. Further detailed information is included later on in this guide.

- For those of you travelling into Belgium from afar, **Brussels airport** website (Zaventem), includes information on how to get to the center by public transport:
<http://www.brusselsairport.be>
 - Bus numbers #12 and #21 run from the airport and go to Place Luxembourg, right in front of the European Parliament. Less than 5 euro for a ticket
 - The Train will take you from the airport to the train stations at Brussels Nord, Central and Brussels Midi. From here you can easily get to other public transport. About 9 euro for a ticket
 - There is a Taxi queue outside the arrival gates. Taxi will take you anywhere- from the Airport to the centre can be between 40-50 euros
- **Charleroi airport** is located about one hour south of Brussels, and is sometimes called Brussels South. Ryanair operates from this airport. It is accessible by train and bus from Brussels. <http://www.charleroi-airport.com/en/>
- If travelling to Brussels by rail into one of the three main stations, Bruxelles Centrale, Bruxelles Nord or Bruxelles Midi, the **SCNB** (Société Nationale des Chemins de fer Belges) website tells you timetables and fares: <http://www.b-rail.be/main/E/>
- Local transport network advice and ticket information from **STIB** (the Société des Transports Intercommunaux de Bruxelles): <http://www.stib.be/index.htm?l=en>

Language Barrier

Living in Brussels gives you a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in a new culture and new language. There are several language course options available once you arrive, which we will discuss during Welcome Week, but it's a good idea to brush up on your French and/or Dutch skills before arriving. If you don't want to spend money on language learning software such as Rosetta Stone or Berlitz, there is a similar online programme called Live Mocha that is free: <http://www.livemocha.com/>.

Housing

While looking for your house, try contacting current students to see if you can stay with them while you search. There is also affordable accommodation if you book early enough in advance. Travel websites can often offer deals on hotels while you look for accommodations.

Additional information:

Brussels comprises 19 communes, which are all situated inside the Ring road that circles the city. The majority of newcomers, especially English-speakers, settle in a small number of these communes, located in the southern and eastern parts of the city, near international schools and companies.

Communes and suburbs to the north and west of the city tend to be cheaper but are not as popular among (English-speaking) foreigners as they are quite far from international schools, international business, and social life. Whatever part of the city you decide to live in, there is plenty of property for sale or for rent.

The communes of Etterbeek and Ixelles are nearest to the School and many students choose to live here. However, most of the communes cover large areas! Areas of Etterbeek and Ixelles can in fact be quite far from the school. A little effort in researching transit lines, walking distances and businesses or shopping/dining facilities in an area can have a large impact over the course of your time here in Brussels.

For detailed information regarding the communes, please see:

<http://www.xpats.com/planning-move-bulletins-guide-19-communes-brussels>.

Types of Property

Apartments come in one-room, two-room, three or more room varieties. The number of rooms listed usually refers to the number of bedrooms, rather than the total number of rooms.

A **flat or studio** is typically one room divided into living and sleeping spaces.

A **mezzanine** refers to a loft-style space above the living area which serves as a bedroom.

Student Housing usually refers to one room in a large house shared with other students.

How to Find Properties

Walking

Landlords often post apartment vacancies in their windows. This is how **most** BSIS students have found their apartments. Find a neighbourhood you like, and look for the orange vacancy signs in the windows. Take a pen and paper with you to jot down phone numbers, addresses, and facts about the apartment listed on the “A Louer/Te Huur” (For rent) signs. Just remember you’re not the only person looking for accommodation, especially with the two other major Universities (VUB and ULB) located within the same area as BSIS.

BSIS Housing Blog

This will be a great way for many of you to find flats and roommates before you even arrive here. Check out the housing blog at <http://www.kent.ac.uk/brussels/news/housing.html> Many of us have landlords who’ll want to pass the flat onto another round of students, since we hold a unique niche in the market, wanting only a year arrangement. This can also greatly reduce the hassle of looking for a property, judging it without understanding the market here and sorting out the utilities, since advertising students will be able to explain that all to you. At most, you’ll have to send the guarantee to hold the flat; at least, you’ll have to arrange to meet someone when you arrive. Just keep in mind that these emails come up quickly and go fast, so keep your eyes open and be ready!

Classified Ads

There is an array of properties for sale and for rent in the classified ads section of [The Bulletin](#), Belgium’s newsweekly publication in English, published each Thursday. Depending on where you want to live, you will most likely start by perusing classified advertisements in these or other local daily/weekly newspapers.

A French-language publication, the **Vlan** undoubtedly has the most extensive list of properties available in Brussels at any given moment, however, non-English speakers often find it difficult to make sense of the abbreviations. The [Vlan On-Line](#) is also in French.

Agencies

Those in a hurry often contact a number of real estate agencies. Most of these have staff available with knowledge of English. They sometimes even drive their potential clients to visit the properties on their books. This is an advantage to people with limited time and who are not familiar with local geography. However, agencies do not always specialise in student accommodation. The cost of using these agencies is borne by the property owner, not by the prospective tenant. The owner usually passes on the first month's rent to the estate agency introducing the tenant.

Estate agents can ask new tenants:

1. To sign and respect the rental lease agreement.
2. To pay the first month's rental in advance.
3. To arrange a guarantee to indemnify the owner or agents for any damage done by the tenant. The agent may not demand that the tenant pay this guarantee in cash (usually the equivalent to three months' rent).
4. To take out an insurance policy on the property to cover the tenant's liability.

Websites

www.easyroomate.com

www.immoweb.be

www.vlan.be

www.immonewatlas.be

www.appartager.com

www.colocation.com

www.xpats.com

***** Try to book a few appointments for viewings through websites (or other mediums) before your arrival. Start early to make sure you have found accommodation before Welcome Week begins!**

Important!

Be very careful when handing over money if you have not already seen the property. Some students have lost money in the past when they have given their money to 'landlords' without full details of the property and the lease.

Lease Agreements

When you have found a property to suit your taste and budget, you will be asked to sign a lease. In 1991, changes were made in Belgian legislation governing unfurnished rental property. Two types of leases were created – the standard lease for nine years and the short-term lease for up to three years. Many students manage to find a one year lease or contracts with no time specific lease.

Expertise

Another important term to get used to is "expertise", which pertains in real estate to the evaluation of a property. When you first enter your chosen rented house or apartment, the first thing which landlords usually require is a detailed examination of the property known as an "état des lieux/staat van het huis". An "expert" from a special evaluation company is contacted (usually chosen by the landlord) who comes and makes a full report of every scratch, stain, crack, chip ... as well as notes about the walls that are in perfect condition, brand new carpets, newly painted corridors... The tenant and the landlord typically pay for the expert 50/50. If the tenant chooses the expert, then the tenant pays 100 percent of the bill. Either way, the wise tenant should ensure that all defects are precisely recorded on this document so that he cannot be charged for their repair.

When you leave your rented home or apartment, an inspection will be carried out once again by a professional expert. A complete list will again be made, this time mentioning the holes and nails you may have left in the walls, the wine stain on the carpet... Every bit of damage has its price, which you then owe to the landlord before your guarantee is reimbursed to you. Usually landlords will try to claim something, and some will even try to keep the entire amount of the guarantee.

The best piece of advice is simply to be aware that when you sign a lease in Belgium, you are essentially agreeing to stay put for a period of three years and to put three months of rent in the hands of your landlord. If you do terminate your lease prematurely and/or cause any damage to the property or its contents, you will most likely recuperate only a portion of your guarantee.

You must be cautious that the clause regarding ending the contract is within the contract. Don't hesitate to ask your French or Dutch speaking friends, depending on the commune, to be sure of what is written and what needs to be added to the contract.

Additional Charges

In addition to the rental fee per month, some landlords require tenants to pay for other monthly services. These extra fees are commonly referred to as "charges". This usually includes the costs that a landlord pays each month to the benefit of all tenants living in a single building. In fact, you are being asked to help participate in the global budget of care-taking. Such fees may cover the weekly cleaning of the entrance hall, maintenance of electrical equipment, electricity for commonly lit areas of the property, maintenance of the garden, elevators, etc.

Not all landlords charge extra fees. But whether they do or don't, such fees are **rarely mentioned in the rental price** you find listed in a classified ad. Always ask your landlord if there are charges and by all means, do try to negotiate. Likewise, never agree to pay for bills presented to you before clearly checking to see if this is your responsibility. Previously, some tenancy agreements specified that the property taxes were to be paid by the tenant. This practice has now been declared illegal. The property tax must be paid by the landlord. Cases of excessive charges by companies managing apartment buildings in Belgium are, alas, not uncommon.

You are responsible for cleaning your chimney/heating system once a year and being able to prove you've done so. Keep good track of your receipt for insurance purposes.

Help Line

If you ever do wonder what you are responsible for (or not), don't hesitate to visit the National Tenant's Association (Office National des Locataires). The service does not answer questions over the phone, but asks that you write to them at the address below, or stop by their offices. If you have problems with your landlord or rented property, this service also offers an advisory service which costs some approximately €20 per consultation.

Please ring the number below for the current opening hours which can change depending on the time of year. Note also that this is a French-language service that does not guarantee to be able to address English-speakers in English. As with all services in Belgium, if you're not able to communicate in the local language(s), foresee a translator.

Office National des Locataires 1176 Chaussee de Wavre, Brussels

Tel. 02/218.75.30 (answering machine only)

Insuring Your Home

Over 95% of rental agreements in Belgium require the tenant to insure the landlord's property according to Belgian law (Article 1733, Belgian Civil Code), which states that the tenant is responsible for any damage which is caused to the building unless able to prove that this damage is not his/her fault. Check your lease carefully, if possible with your insurer, to make sure you meet the insurance requirements specified therein. If you set up a bank account with the ING bank on the VUB campus, they can provide you with insurance for about 80 euro per year.

Commune Registration

One of the first things you will do upon arriving in Brussels is register at the commune in which you are residing. By law, you must register with the authorities at your local commune **within 8 days** of arrival in Belgium, regardless of whether you have found an apartment yet or not. The list of commune offices is on the next page. Once you have an apartment, you can make an appointment to get your Belgian identity card. This process is not difficult, but it can take quite a long time (commonly up to three months) so we advise you to make the call as soon as possible.

According to Belgian law, you must also report to the commune within a week any time your address changes, so you may find you visit them more than once upon arrival. (This is a small administrative hassle that could save you lots of headaches later on. Another added benefit is that when you register, your commune can tell you how to apply for a work permit as a full-time student.)

The process may vary slightly depending upon your country of origin and the commune in which you live but this is a good procedure to follow. First, call or visit (visiting may be easier if you are not proficient in French and more likely to get you a response) your local commune to make an appointment to register. Once you have been to the commune, the police will visit your flat to ensure you are the one that lives there. To ensure you do not run into problems, **make sure your name is on your mailbox/buzzer!** You do not need to be present at the time of the visit; the police will leave some documents for you if you are not home. These documents will be from the municipal authorities and will include an appointment time/date for registration, hopefully within a month (but, again it depends on the commune).

Once the police visit has taken place, you will be invited back to the commune. As a general rule you should take the following with you:

- The paperwork the officers give you when they visit your flat
- The documents required for your student visa (if you needed one)
- Your passport
- A letter from the University acknowledging you as registered
- 3-5 passport photos (having more is better than not having enough)
- Confirmation of sufficient financial support (scholarship/loan letter or bank statement)
- A copy of your lease agreement
- Proof of health insurance
- Cash for registration

IMPORTANT: If you do not register within a reasonable timeframe, you do run the risk of deportation. Also note, if you travel outside the country before your identity card has been issued without special dispensation from your commune, Belgian authorities reserve the right to refuse re-entry into the country. Please check the details on visa and whether you have a single or multiple entry visa. **You cannot leave Belgium and then re-enter if you have a single entry visa until you have your ID Card.**

Banking and Telecommunication

One of the easiest ways to go about banking is to open an account at the ING on the VUB campus. See map at <http://www.vub.ac.be/english/infoabout/campuses/etterbeek.html>. 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.**

Note: This is only possible at this branch, and it may be wise to make an appointment ahead of your arrival if you are concerned about a wait to open your account.

This bank is open 10:00am to 17:00pm, Monday to Friday. If you need to call for further enquiries, the number is 02 626 9890.

In order to open a bank account with ING, please bring official proof of your permanent address (such as a driver's licence, utility bill, or tax return). If you have already secured housing in Belgium, you should also bring proof of your Belgian address. In addition, you should bring proof of admission to the University of Kent at Brussels.

You have several options regarding depositing your money here in Belgium.

1. You can bring a cheque denominated in dollars. This will take some time to clear (sometimes up to a month), and there will be a surcharge for conversion.
2. You can bring enough money for immediate use, then open an account and have someone wire the money to you. The bank will give you the appropriate IBAN and SWIFT codes when you open the account.
3. Take money out from an account back home and deposit it in Belgium

Usually **bank transfers are the easiest way of transferring money.** Make sure you ask your bank for the option to wire money home in advance so that they know to expect funds to be withdrawn or put in.

In addition, most ATMs will accept foreign cards; you can therefore withdraw money as you need it while waiting for checks to clear or money to be transferred. However, to be safe, it is recommended that you check with your bank first, to determine whether they put limits on withdrawals abroad. This also applies to credit card purchases. It may be best to contact your bank to inform them that you will be abroad for the next year.

It is extremely important that you have a Belgian bank account as soon as possible, and that you are able to deposit money into it. As will be reiterated below, when signing a contract for an apartment here in Belgium you are usually required to have **two months deposit** in a joint bank account between you and your landlord; as well as, the first month's rent up front. Without this money available to you and a bank account you may find it very difficult to sort your living accommodations. Also, keep in mind that the average student can pay up to 700 Euro's per month total. You will need upwards of 2100 Euro's in your account to get an apartment, and should you be getting student loans these monies are unlikely to be here early enough for you to cover this expense.

Telecommunication :

There are different options to compare to find your internet/mobile phone provider.

- Proximus (the first Belgium provider / good quality / attractive prices for packs Internet-TV-landline-mobile plan)
- Telenet (Especially for Flanders)
- VOO (cheap / Wallonie - Brussels / not available in all areas of Brussels)
- BASE (a good challenger for mobile plans)
- Mobistar (only mobile plans)

Settling In

Supermarkets

The following are the main supermarket chains:

- GB / CARREFOUR (The GB on Boondael near school carries a selection of school supplies and provides students with a 5% discount in addition to a customer card. Take your student ID to set up the discount card.)
- DELHAIZE / CORA
- COLRUYT (cheap, wholesale, carries school supplies as well)
- LIDL (cheap, not as much selection)
- ALDI (cheap, not as much selection)

Shopping for Furniture, House ware, Appliances, and School Supplies

- IKEA Anderlecht (Bus stop: IKEA, Metro: CERIA/COOVI)
<http://www.ikea.com/be/nl/?cid=be%3Eps%3Ego%3Ebrand%3Eikea.be>
- BLOKKER (house ware and appliances) http://www.blokker.be/page2_fr.html
- Casa http://www.casashops.com/be_nl/home.html
- HEMA (Interior, bathroom, kitchen, school supplies) <http://www.hema.be/>
- PLAN-IT (Similar to Home Depot) <https://www.plan-it.be/>
- BRICO (Indoor and outdoor appliances) <http://www.brico.be/wabs/fr/index.do>
- Media Markt (Electronics, Small Appliances, Britta, Hair Dryers, etc)
<http://www.mediamarkt.com>
- City 2 (large shopping mall at Rogier Metro stop) <http://www.city2.be>
- Waterstone's Bookstore (English bookstore where you can find many of your required text books. Show your student ID card for a discount)
Boulevard Adolphe Maxlaan 71-75 B, 1000 Bruxelles
<http://www.waterstones.com/>
- Club (school supplies) <http://www.club.be>

Note: You can find only two-ring (not three ring) binders and hole punchers in Belgium.

Electricity and Gas Providers

There are a number of options, though the most commonly used provider for both is Electrabel http://www.electrabel.be/homepage_b2b/homepage_en.aspx. Be aware, however, that it is quite costly and other low-cost options are available throughout Brussels.

Waste Disposal

The City of Brussels requires residents to separate garbage and recycling into three different colored bags (yellow, blue, and white), which can be bought at any supermarkets. Garbage and Waste disposal are collected twice per week. Consult the following website to find out the collection schedule for your specific address: <http://www.bruxelles-proprete.be/Content/html/dechets/index.asp>. Other information can be found at: <http://www.brussels.be/artdet.cfm/4023>

You can also ask to receive orange trash bags to collect organic waste, which is collected weekly. For now this is an initiative but if it proves to be a success it might become implemented at a larger scale.

Getting Around

To ride any bus, tram, or metro you will need to purchase a ticket. Single “jump” tickets can be purchased in the station where you take the metro, either from the ticket windows or from the automated GO machines (which have an English language option). You can also purchase a ticket on the bus, tram or metro for a charge – but it will be more expensive.

Single “jump” tickets are valid for one hour after the time that they are first validated and allow you to transfer to different modes of transport with the same ticket, as long as you are within the one hour time limit. However, you need to run your ticket through the little orange ticket machine at each transfer point. **Tickets can also be purchased for 1 day, 3 days, 5 days, or 1, 5 and 10 “jump” voyages** from any ticket booth at the metro stations or the STIB offices. Note: Always make sure to buy a ticket and to have it stamped before you get on a bus, metro, or tram, or otherwise buy one from the driver. If you are caught without a ticket, you will be fined, sometimes over 100 Euro!

Note: If you need to buy a ticket, bring **small bills and change**. At many of the smaller stations there is not an attendant on duty to purchase tickets from, and one has to depend on the ticket machine. The machines allow you to purchase a range of passes, but do not accept bills. Change is given only in coin form. You can also use your bank card at most machines; however, it is wise to have coins with you if you are expecting to purchase a ticket.

Public Transport Passes

It is also possible to purchase monthly and yearly electronic MOBIB cards directly from the STIB “BOOTIK” offices located at select metro stations throughout the city or online at http://www.stib-mivb.be/article.html?_guid=800309e8-1983-3410-b599-e90c40f84dea&l=en. If you are **under 25**, you can buy a **yearly MOBIB card**, valid for 1 year on the complete STIB network, for only **120 euros**.

You will need to bring a photo ID with you, a letter confirming your registration at the University of Kent, and a passport photo to obtain a pass for the first time. A list of STIB offices can be found at <http://www.stib.be/points-de-vente-verkooppunten.html?l=en>

Note: Once you have purchased the initial MOBIB card, you can recharge it online, at STIB KIOSK stands (located at all underground metro stations), GO stands (located at nearly all metro, tram, and bus stops), Relay stores (found throughout the city) and some GB supermarkets. This can prove to be very convenient when lines get really long at the beginning of the month.

More information

More information on the public transport system can be found at:

http://www.mivb.be/index.htm?guest_user=guest_en

The only problem with public transport in Brussels is that it stops running by around midnight. Night buses run until 3am on Fridays and Saturdays. You can find information on this at <http://www.stib-mivb.be/horaires-dienstregeling2.html?l=en>. Taxis are your best option when in need of transport at those late hours. To find a taxi stand near you, visit:

<http://www.bruxellesmobilite.irisnet.be/articles/taxi/>

In addition to taxis, there are two additional alternatives for transportation, particularly at night time, which are cheaper than taxis. They are COLLECTO and UBER. For additional information about COLLECTO follow this link: <http://be.brussels/mobility-and-transport/getting-around-brussels/taxis-and-collecto>

The best way to contact UBER is to download the application to your mobile phone. Further information on UBER services in the Brussels are can be found at <https://www.uber.com/cities/brussels>

Cheap Travel in Europe

If you are interested in travelling around Europe while you are living in Brussels, here are a few transport options:

<http://www.brusselsairlines.com>

<http://www.easyjet.com>

<http://www.ryanair.com>

<http://www.vueling.com/en>

<http://www.eurostar.com> (for journeys to London and Paris)

<http://www.thalys.com/be/en/> (for journeys from Brussels to France, Germany, and the Netherlands)

<http://www.belgianrail.be/en/> (for trips within Belgium)

<http://www.megabus.com/> (for journeys to just about anywhere)

Medical Information

Belgium has an excellent medical system, and as a BSIS student, you will have access to the following services on top of general Brussels-area coverage. If you require assistance don't hesitate to ask your BGSU welfare officer.

General Medicine

The VUB provides a walk-in health centre for students and staff in the Y building. See map at <http://www.vub.ac.be/english/infoabout/campuses/etterbeek.html>. The centre should be consulted in case of illness or accident and for general health information, prescriptions, dentistry, physiotherapy, and preventive health care. Bring your Kent ID card, Belgian ID card, and Belgian health insurance card (if you have one).

VUB Doctors may generally be consulted with or without an appointment, for a very reasonable price (usually about 25 euro per visit).

Visits and emergencies:

During working hours: phone 02/629.28.13 or book an appointment online

<http://www.ugpvub.be/>

Calls for visits are accepted before 12.00 noon

Outside working hours: phone 02/242.43.44. Only for urgent cases!

Physiotherapy

VUB Physiotherapy offers rehabilitation and physical therapy by appointment: 02/629.23.33. In addition, searching English speaking service providers will also provide you with a current list of Osteopaths/ athletic therapists and massage. BGSU welfare officers can also assist you in finding additional care.

Dental Care

A completely equipped dental surgery clinic is available at the VUB by appointment: 02/629.23.00

Mental Health Care

You should contact the Wellbeing team in Canterbury in the first instance on wellbeing@kent.ac.uk or use one of the phones in the student area.

English Speaking Physicians

Brussels is truly an international city and your national embassy website should be able to provide you with a list of doctors by speciality.

Emergency Numbers

Medical Service (<i>Service médical d'urgence / Medische spoeddienst</i>)	100
Police (<i>Police Fédérale / Federale politie</i>)	101
Fire Service (<i>Pompiers / Medische spoeddienst</i>)	100
Pan-European emergency number (calls are free from any mobile cellular or fixed-line telephone)	112 Website

Crisis & Help Lines

Service	Telephone
Community Help Service Helpline 24 hour crisis and information service in English	Tel: 02 648 40 14 Website
Tele Onthaal - Crisis Helpline Support and advice for all crises	Tel: 106 Website (in Dutch)
Télé-Accueil - Crisis Helpline Support and advice for all crises	Tel: 107 Website (in French)
Telefonhilfe - Crisis Helpline Support and advice for all crises	Tel: 108 Website (in German)
SOS Solitude - Crisis Helpline Monday to Friday from 09:00-18:00	Tel: 02 548 98 08
Drugs Helpline	Tel: 02 227 52 52 Website (in French)
HIV/AIDS	Tel: 0800 20 120 Website (in French)
Child Abuse/Childfocus (24/24)	Tel: 110 Website
Children's Helpline	Tel: 103 Website
Victim Support Agency	Tel: 02 537 66 10
Cancer Helpline	Tel: 0800 15 800
Suicide/Crisis Line	Tel: 0800 32 123
Red Cross	Tel: 105
Anti-Poison	Tel: 070 245 245 Website (Dutch & French)
Burns Unit	Tel: 071 448 000
Emergency Doctor	Tel: 1307 Tel: 02 479 18 18 (Brussels only)
Emergency Veterinary Service	Tel: 02 479 99 90

Other Sources of Information

The **Belgian Yellow Pages** can help you find most services you will need during your time in Brussels here: (English) <http://www.goldenpages.be/> or (French) <http://www.pagesdor.be/>

Brussels Commissioner Office offer excellent information, in English, for all newcomers to Brussels and those already here who have not found the answers yet:
<http://www.commissioner.brussels/>

Maps for tourists, food lovers, children, Tintin fans and gays of Brussels are available for download at **Visit Brussels**: http://visitbrussels.be/bitc/BE_en/essential-brussels/brochures.do

Information for expats by expats: includes housing advertisements, jobs, events, classifieds, a Q&A session. **The Bulletin** online: <http://www.xpats.com/en>

For general information about the Brussels Capital Region <http://www.brussels.irisnet.be/>

For checking out cultural and music events in Brussels, **Agenda** (in French and Dutch only) is a useful source of information: <http://www.agenda.be/fr.html?switch=fr>

Brussels is the political hotspot of Europe. Therefore, if you are interested learning about what is happening in the EU or internationally, you might want to you to sign up to the newsletter for the following website: <http://www.europeanagenda.eu>

You can order a free Belgium Welcome Pack and find more information at www.xpats.com

Another good site to check out is <http://brussels.angloinfo.com/>

We hope this has been helpful and we wish you the best of luck in getting settled in Brussels.

See you soon!

The Brussels Graduate Student Union (BGSU)