

FAQ Info Session International Students Fac WE - 26/05/2020

Questions arranged per topic:

1. June exams

- *If I did not have the time to prepare for an exam, do I have to take it anyway? Or can I just tell the professor that I won't be there and I want to sit the exam in August? And will I be marked as absent anyway?*
You are advised to inform the course titular beforehand to explain the situation and ask for a 0/20 instead of an 'absent'.

2. 2nd session (August-September)

- *Will second session be extended until September?*
Second session will start one week earlier (10/08) and end a few days later (9/09).
- *For the exams in second session (August), should we again register for that exam?*
Normally you are automatically registered for your exams in second session. If this would change due to the corona situation, you will be informed through Canvas. It might be possible though that you have to book a time slot. This will be clearly communicated to you.
- *I am in my home country now and will be taking exams in June online and I am thinking to come back to Belgium before the second session (August). Will it be possible to travel to Belgium by end of June or early July to Belgium?*
Travel restrictions are still in place. More news about a possible easing of restrictions is expected mid-June. The faculty will use the same procedure for Force Majeure due to corona for 2nd session. – More information: <https://we.vub.ac.be/en/organisation-exams-june-2020-2nd-exam-period>
- *If we have exams in second session, will our transcript also be issued in July or only in September?*
Your transcript will also be issued in July.
- *The grade from the first session exam that I have failed, will it affect my GPA or will it be replaced by the grade of second session?*
The grade from first session will be replaced entirely by the result obtained in second session, and thus not affect your GPA. To determine the average for the entire programme, only the mark with which you obtained the ECTS-credits will be taken into account (in principle only results of more than 10/20).

3. Master thesis

- *I plan to deregister my thesis this year and defend next academic year. I have filled the form for the Dean's approval since the deadline is on June 3rd. However, I have not received any reply. Is it still possible ?*
Deadline is June 3rd. Applications are thoroughly examined. A decision will always be communicated.
- *Do I need to present a master thesis document before enrolling for the 2nd year of the master?*
No, this is not necessary.
- *I have decided to submit my Master thesis only in the second session in August. Should I inform someone or is there any formality regarding this?*

No, there is no formality. Simply inform your supervisor and programme coordinator.

- *I have to collect the science data from the laboratory for my thesis writing. However, the laboratories are closed due to the coronavirus for master students. Do you know when the labs open again?*
The labs are open again, for example for PhD students, but strict safety regulations apply. Please contact your supervisor to discuss what is possible, i.e. if it is better to let someone else perform the experiments for you. The closure of the labs should not in any way hamper the possibility to graduate.
- *What if I still have to take exams after the thesis defense? Is this a problem? In Italy for example you can't defend your thesis before finishing the exams.*
This is not a problem.
- *To defend my thesis in the third session (January), do I need to deregister it?*
By unsubscribing, you do not use exam opportunities and you can avoid that study progress measures are imposed upon you (<https://student.vub.be/en/study-progress-regulations>). Unsubscribing will not result in refunding of tuition fee.
Remark! Defending in January means that you have to re-enroll for the programme and register for the master thesis next academic year. In other words, it is not a defense in third session, but it is a defense in first session of 2020-2021. Keep in mind that you need to apply for graduation in January. Deadline is December 1st. (<https://student.vub.be/en/graduation-in-january#graduation-in-january>).
- *How can I deregister my thesis? I tried to drop the it on Student Selfservice, but it says it is not possible at this time of the academic year...*
For deregistration for the master thesis you will need the explicit permission of the dean. Please use the following online form:
https://fms.vub.ac.be/fmi/webd/form_UITZONDER_EXCEPT
- *Can we start with our thesis in February and defend next January?*
In consultation with your supervisor and programme director, it is possible to start the master's thesis in February, and defend in January of the following academic year. You only register for the master thesis in the year that you defend it.
Remark! Defending in January means that you have to re-enroll for the programme and register for the master's thesis next academic year. In other words, it is not a defense in third session, but it is a defense in first session of 2020-2021. Keep in mind that you need to apply for graduation in January. Deadline is December 1st. (<https://student.vub.be/en/graduation-in-january#graduation-in-january>).

4. Study progress

- *If I failed a subject three times, will I be refused to re-enroll in the programme?*
Your re-enrolment will only be refused if you fail a course for a third year in row when binding conditions have been put on you. If you are not under binding conditions, you will not be refused.
- *If you have 0/20 for an exam grade can you retake the course later?*
Failed courses (whatever the result) can be retaken, mandatory courses have to be retaken.
- *For a 120 credits MA, we only can study maximum 3 years? If I still not finish after 3 years, what should I do?*
There is a difference between what is allowed with regard to study progress by the university and the regulations concerning residence permit extension. If you came to Belgium on a student visa and need to extend your residence permit on an annual

basis, the government expects you to finish your 120 ECTS MSc programme in three years. Your residence permit will not be extended if you do not succeed in doing this.

- *If I obtained more than 120 ECTS, can I remove some courses with low grades to have a higher GPA?*

No, this is not possible.

- *I have binding conditions. Will these be relaxed due to the current situation?*

For the time being, the VUB has decided not to adjust or relax the known rules in advance.

5. Re-enrolment / Academic year 2020-2021

- *When re enrolling for the second year of my Master's programme, will I have to submit all the documents again?*

No, this will not be necessary. You will receive an email that contains all steps on how to re-enroll in your Student Selfservice.

- *Do you have any idea about next year's lectures? Will they continue be online? If yes, will we still be able to live in the VUB residence?*

This is not decided yet. The university depends on the regulations and guidelines from the government. If teaching on campus will be allowed, it will most likely be some form of blended learning next year. As soon as there is more information, you will be informed.

- *If I postpone my study next academic year, can I re-enroll in 2021-2022?*

You can put your study temporarily on hold by not re-enrolling next academic year. The obtained credits remain valid within the programme. When you re-enroll, you start where you left the programme. It is advisable to discuss this option with your programme coordinator or programme director.

6. Residence permit extension

- *How much is possible to change in the regulations concerning residence permit extension due to the current situation?*

This is still unclear. For now, no changes have been made yet concerning the requirement to be physically present to extend your residence permit, and concerning the study progress regulations. In case changes are made, you will be informed.

7. Online teaching

- *Can we also give feedback about the quality of the online classes?*

As always, students' feedback will be asked through an online education evaluation. In addition, you can inform your student representatives, so they can bring this up in the Educational Board meetings.