



BLOCKED ACCOUNT: GENERAL CONDITIONS AND PROCEDURE FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2023-2024

Please read our General Conditions and Procedures document carefully.

As from academic year 2022–2023 the Flemish universities (Antwerp, Ghent, Hasselt, Leuven & Brussels) have decided to ask the same monthly installment for the blocked account.

A single blocked account application will be **€ 950/month** for both **visa purposes** and **residence permit renewal**.

A family blocked account application will be **€ 2100/month** for **visa purposes** and **residence permit renewal**.

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APPLICATION DEADLINES

Blocked account applications for obtaining a visa can be made from 1 April 2023 until 31 July 2023.

Blocked account applications for residence permit extension can be made from 1 August 2023.

You can have your solvency certificate in ca. 1 week depending on how closely you monitor the progress and how fast we receive your international payment. Please note, depending on your bank / nationality, it can take up to a week before we receive your international payment in our account.

AMOUNT TO BE DEPOSITED

The amounts to be deposited vary depending on the purpose of the solvency certificate ([visa](#) or [residence permit renewal](#)).

For academic year 2023-2024, the amount **single students** are expected to transfer is **950 EUR** multiplied by the number of months of their stay.

For a long stay blocked account application for visa purposes this comes down to **12,350 EUR (= 13 months stay)** **OR 950 EUR** multiplied by the number of months for a short stay blocked account (= less than 1 year).

For a long stay blocked account application for residence permit renewal this comes down to **11,400 EUR (12 months stay)** for one academic year **OR 950 EUR** multiplied by the number of months for a short stay blocked account (= less than 1 year).

For a **family (reunion) blocked account**, the amounts are **2,100 EUR** multiplied by the number of months for a short stay. **For a long stay application for visa purposes the amount comes down to 27,300 EUR OR for a long stay application for residence permit renewal the amount comes down to 25,200 EUR**

These amounts are non-negotiable.

No additional funds (e.g. tuition fees) are accepted, as this system is only a procedure intended for obtaining the visa or residence permit.

After having submitted your application, you will be informed on the next steps to transfer the money.

Please be aware that it can take up to 1 week before the money arrives on the VUB-account.

Please use the correct reference (blocked account VOPA31 – your name – your student number¹) when making the money transfer, this will help the correct handling of your application.

If the uploaded proof of payment is insufficient (reference is missing) or not clearly readable (characters other than Western ones), we will ask additional proof to match it with your application and it will take more time to issue your solvency certificate.

VUB will only accept deposits made in **one single transaction**.

CONFIRMATION

After confirmation that the required amount has arrived on the VUB account, the student will receive the solvency certificate to declare at the embassy (**new student**) or the municipal administration (**renewal of the identity card**).

Students who would like the International Relations office (IRMO) to send a soft copy to the embassy must fill in the field “Email address of the Embassy” in the workflow (Blocked Account online tool). However, please note that some embassies only accept hard copies of the documents from the student directly.

We do not provide any follow-up regarding the student’s visa application status. The process of obtaining a visa is a matter handled between student and the Belgian immigration authorities. The university is not involved and cannot interfere in the decision making process of the visa application. Please note that this process can take up to 3 months.

We will only send “Blocked Account Certificates” and no other documents such as scans of “Admission Letters”.

¹ Student number is mentioned on the Conditional Letter of Acceptance, next to Reference.

PAYMENT AND REFUND BY MONTHLY INSTALMENTS

As previously stated, we are now diversifying depending on the purpose of your solvency certificate ([visa](#) or [residence permit renewal](#)).

Single students applying for a blocked account for [visa purposes](#) will deposit 12,350 EUR for an entire academic year. They will receive 13 monthly instalments of 950 EUR from October 2023 until October 2024 included. By doing so, the student will receive a residence permit valid until 31 October 2024.

Single students applying for a blocked account for [residence permit renewal](#) will deposit 11,400 EUR for an entire academic year. They will receive 12 monthly instalments of 950 EUR from November 2023 until October 2024 included. By doing so, the student will receive a new residence permit valid until 31 October 2024.

VISA purpose single		Residence permit renewal single	
Month	Transfer	Month	Transfer
October*	950 EUR + 950 EUR (- admin fee and SIP insurance fee)	October	no payment
November*		November*	950 EUR + 950 EUR (- admin fee and SIP insurance fee)
December		December*	
January	950 EUR	January	950 EUR
February	950 EUR	February	950 EUR
March	950 EUR	March	950 EUR
April	950 EUR	April	950 EUR
May	950 EUR	May	950 EUR
June	950 EUR	June	950 EUR
July	950 EUR	July	950 EUR
August	950 EUR	August	950 EUR
September	950 EUR	September	950 EUR
October	950 EUR	October	950 EUR

* In order to help students manage the high installation cost and because some costs are being deducted from the first payment, **VUB decided that this first payment would cover two months.**

Students applying for a family blocked account for [visa purposes](#) will deposit 27,300 EUR for an entire academic year. They will receive 13 installments of 2,100 EUR from October 2023 until October 2024 included. By doing so, the student and his/her family members will receive a residence permit valid until 31 October 2024.

Students applying for a family blocked account for [residence permit renewal](#) will deposit 25,200 EUR for an entire academic year. They will receive 12 installments of 2,100 EUR from November 2023 until October 2024 included. By doing so, the student and his/her family members will receive a new residence permit valid until 31 October 2024.

VISA purpose family		Residence permit renewal family	
Month	Transfer	Month	Transfer
October*	2100 EUR + 2100 EUR (- admin fee and SIP insurance fee)	October	no payment
November*		November*	2100 EUR + 2100 EUR (- admin fee and SIP insurance fee)
December	2100 EUR	December*	
January	2100 EUR	January	2100 EUR
February	2100 EUR	February	2100 EUR
March	2100 EUR	March	2100 EUR
April	2100 EUR	April	2100 EUR
May	2100 EUR	May	2100 EUR
June	2100 EUR	June	2100 EUR
July	2100 EUR	July	2100 EUR
August	2100 EUR	August	2100 EUR
September	2100 EUR	September	2100 EUR
October	2100 EUR	October	2100 EUR

* In order to help students manage the high installation cost and because some costs are being deducted from the first payment, **VUB decided that this first payment would cover two months.**

For a stay shorter than one academic year:

- Single students will deposit and receive 950 EUR x the number of months of their stay
- Students with family will deposit and receive 2,100 EUR x the number of months of their stay
- A short stay blocked account can only be extended under specific circumstances.

VUB commits itself towards the Immigration Office (DVZ) to pay the student a monthly amount of 950 EUR (single) or 2,100 EUR (family) for the entire duration of the blocked account contract. Therefore, we are not authorised to make any early transfers to the student before the start of the contract.

In order to help students manage the high installation cost and because some costs are being deducted from the first payment, VUB decided that the first payment would cover two months.

In other words: if the student uses the blocked account to obtain a **visa**, VUB will pay the first instalment in October and it will cover October & November 2023. The 2nd instalment will be transferred in December and will contain the December instalment.

If the student has a blocked account for **residence permit renewal**, VUB will pay the first instalment in November and it will cover November & December 2023. The 2nd instalment will be transferred in January 2024 and will contain the January instalment.

Upon arrival, the student is requested to open a Belgian bank account and to communicate the bank account number to the International Relations office (IRMO). **For security reasons, bank account numbers can only be communicated face-to-face at the welcome desk** of the International Relations office, and **NOT** digitally (so NOT by email). An alternative procedure will be installed in case the welcome desk is closed for reasons of force majeure.

Online banks such as Revolut, N26 or WISE are also acceptable as long as the IBAN number of the account corresponds with the SEPA-zone regulations.

You have to show your passport/ID-card for the purpose of identification. Monthly installments can only be paid to a Belgian bank account in name of the student, and **not** to the account of a third party.

Even if you have a blocked account for a second, third year, it is necessary to register for SIP (= Student Insurance Programme, see below insurance chapter) and to reconfirm your bank details, this is possible via mail for 2nd, 3rd, ... year students.

VUB will only be able to start transferring monthly installments as soon as the student communicates an IBAN number of his personal account that meets the abovementioned conditions. Opening a traditional Belgian bank account can take several weeks².

Afterwards the student will receive the first installment within the shortest possible time, depending on external circumstances (holidays, weekends, ...). Therefore, we urge students to bring enough cash or a credit card to pay for the first month's living costs, tuition fees, rent as well as the by law-prescribed two months' rent deposit.

If the arrival of the student is delayed, the amount of the first payment will be the sum of the outstanding months.

The cost of the SIP insurance (= Student Insurance Programme) and the administrative cost are deducted in full, from the first installment.

INSURANCE

The registration for a SIP insurance "intégral" (= full coverage) or "complémentaire" (= complementary to the mandatory basic health insurance, f.e. Partena/Helan) is done for the duration of the stay as mentioned on the solvency certificate. The actual amount of the premium is based on the type of insurance and the duration of stay in Belgium. No lump sum is charged.

Stay shorter or equal to 6 months:

- Upon arrival, the student registers for a "SIP intégral" health insurance, which is managed by IRMO. **This insurance is mandatory.**

Stay longer than 6 months:

- Upon arrival, the student registers for the mandatory basic health insurance f.e. Partena/Helan and "SIP complémentaire" health insurance, at the IRMO welcome desk. **Both insurance schemes are mandatory.**

In case of a family reunion request, the insurance is only compulsory for the student. The family member(s) needs to provide insurance on their own means.

The amount of the premium is deducted from the first payment to the student (the monthly premium for a SIP "complémentaire" was approximately 24 EUR/month in 2022). The SIP complémentaire costs ca. 303 EUR for 13 months (01/10/23 until 31/10/24) and ca. 279 EUR for 12 months (from 01/11/23 until 31/10/24).

SIP insurance must be renewed at the start of each academic year.

² Banks will perform a background check and it might take several months before the bank account is opened.

Other insurances are only accepted if they match the policy conditions of the SIP insurance.

ADMINISTRATION COST

Students pay an annual administration fee of 150 EUR.

The same rate also applies to short stays (exchange students, International Scholars, etc.) and extensions of stays due to unforeseen circumstances.

The administrative fee is a lump sum and covers, among other things, the work involved in issuing the solvency certificate, the bank costs of the international transfer, the monthly installments, etc. The administration cost does not cover any losses due to exchange rate fluctuations.

The administration fee is 'non-refundable', under any circumstances.

FAMILY REUNION

Students can have their families join them but first, they must **fully establish themselves in Belgium before their family can join them.**

However, for technical reasons, students who are planning to apply for a family reunion later on, should choose **from the start** for a blocked account as “family” when applying for their student visa. They will be asked to transfer **27,300 EUR (Visa)** or **25,200 EUR (residence permit renewal)** and will receive 2,100 EUR per month upon arrival and after presenting their bank info at our welcome desk.

Important: students cannot bring their family along straight away. Immigration law only allows people travelling to Belgium in the framework of “economic migration” (a work visa) to bring along family members.

RENEWAL OF THE RESIDENCE PERMIT (ID-CARD)

When presenting a blocked account certificate for long stay, the Immigration authorities will grant a residence permit until end of October. Please bear in mind that for the extension of the residence permit for the following years of study, a new certificate can only be issued after another **11,400 EUR (or 25,200 EUR for a family)** is transferred in to the blocked account.

The new Belgian legislation **obliges non-EEA students to initiate the extension procedure at the latest 15 days before the expiration date of their current residence permit. We strongly advise students to initiate the extension procedure at the latest 4 weeks before the expiration date of their current residence permit.**

Extension of the ID-card is not possible without the proclamation certificate (=“studievoortgangsattest” in Dutch) of the previous academic year and the registration certificate for the next academic year.

CANCELLATION AND EARLY TERMINATION BY THE STUDENT

In case of cancellation or early termination of the blocked account agreement, the student will have to sign a termination agreement and the Belgian Immigration authorities will be informed. (*)

In the event of cancellation, the deposited funds will be refunded to the account mentioned in article 13 of the blocked account contract. Belgian Immigration authorities will be informed. (*)

In the event of early termination **and** if the student has a VUB student card **and** at least one payment has been made by VUB on the student's Belgian bank account, the student has the choice: either the remaining balance is refunded to the account mentioned in article 13 of the blocked account contract, or it is refunded to the Belgian bank account. Belgian Immigration authorities will be informed. (*)

Requests for refunds should always be made by email (blocked.account@vub.be) and only by the student.

VUB does all transactions in EUR. In the event of a refund VUB is not responsible for any financial losses as a result of exchange rate fluctuations or costs related to an international transfer. The student will carry these costs.

In the event of early termination, even if no installments took place, the SIP insurance premium cannot be reimbursed to the student, not even for the remaining months.

The administration fee is 'non-refundable'.

Refunding the money to a foreign bank account (outside the SEPA zone) can take several weeks since the university is dependent on external parties such as intermediary banks, etc.

(*) Belgian Immigration Office will be informed that the student no longer meets the requirements for proving sufficient financial resources. As a result, the granted visa or residence permit might be withdrawn.

AUTOMATIC TERMINATION AS PER ARTICLE 9 OF THE BLOCKED ACCOUNT CONTRACT

The funds transferred to the blocked account relate to the living expenses of the student for the academic year 2023-2024 and cannot be used for other purposes or academic years.

The student who applied for a long stay blocked account must provide the International Relations office with a Belgian bank account (as soon as available and before the end of the 1st semester). If the student is not able to open a Belgian bank account before the end of the 1st semester, the student should inform the International Relations office of the status of his/her application for a Belgian bank account.

If a student can't make the mobility towards Belgium they must inform the International Relations office of cancellation of their studies before the end of the 1st semester.

The student who applied for a short stay blocked account must provide the International Relations office with a Belgian bank account as soon as available and before the end of the 3rd month of her/his

planned stay in Belgium. If the student is not able to open a Belgian account before the end of the 3rd month of her/his planned stay, then the student should inform the International Relations office on the status of his/her application for a Belgian bank account.

If a can't make the mobility towards Belgium they must inform the International Relations office of cancellation of studies before the end of the 3rd month of their planned stay.

Failure to comply with the above mentioned obligations will result in the automatic termination of the blocked account contract. As a consequence all funds received from the student will be returned to the account mentioned in article 13 of the blocked account contract. Belgian Immigration Office will be informed of this termination/refund, making a mobility for study purposes impossible for the running academic year.