How to apply for a PhD?
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IMPORTANT

DEADLINES
There is **no deadline** for applications. A PhD can be started any time during the year.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS
All applications must be complete upon submission. There are general required documents, the same for all of our programs, and program-specific documents.

For a PhD application, you need the following documents:

- Passport photo
- Identity card or passport
- Research topic and Research proposal
- Document 'Application form Registration PhD'
  (without this **signed** document, your application is invalid)
- CV
- Diploma
- If you are applying in the framework of a joint PhD, please mention this in the uploaded documents.
- Chinese nationals who obtained a degree in China will also need [an APS-certificate](#)
**INTRODUCTION**

Your admission application will go through the following steps:

**Step 1**
- create account
- provide personal details

**Step 2**
- you receive a temporary user account for your application

**Step 3**
- complete your online application

**Step 4**
- 1st formal screening after receipt of your application

**Step 5**
- academic screening of your application by faculty

**Step 6**
- formal screening of your application

**Step 7**
- you will receive final result of your application

**Step 8**
- You can use your conditional letter of acceptance to enroll

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STEP 1: CREATE AN ACCOUNT

Click "create account".

You should now see the screen below. Belgian citizens or students with a residence permit can use their electronic identity card and a card reader to start filling out the application form. Please note that the name you provided will appear on your letter of acceptance and diploma, so you should make sure it is official and filled out correctly.

TIP: "Name" refers to your family name or surname and "first name" refers to your given name.
THE FIELD “STATUTE”
This field will be filled out automatically for Belgian and European citizens. Non-European citizens will be able to choose from several options:

Students (who will be) staying in Belgium with a student visa should choose "Other". Students staying in Belgium with a different type of visa can choose the nature of their stay.

BANK ACCOUNT NUMBER
Please leave the field for the bank account number empty.
**ADDRESS**
Only students with a Belgian national ID number (or Belgian national register number) can provide a Belgian address here. All other students should fill an address from their home country.

**CLICK ‘SAVE’**
Once you have filled out the entire page, click “Save” at the bottom of the page.

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**STEP 2: PRIVACY PREFERENCES**
You will be able to adjust your privacy preferences on this page. The university will only disclose your personal information to third parties if you give your permission and if it is deemed beneficial for you.
**STEP 3: PRIOR EDUCATION**

The third step is the **most important step** of the application procedure. This is where you need to fill out the details of your prior education.

**SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Fill out the information of your secondary education in the first tab.

Students who have not obtained their diploma in Belgium should choose “Abroad”.

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You can then specify in which country you have obtained your diploma. Fill out the rest of the page when you have done so.

CLICK ‘SAVE’ TO PROCEED
**HIGHER EDUCATION**

Fill out all required fields and click ‘save’.

**CLICK ‘SAVE’**

If you have obtained more than one higher education diploma, please fill out the details again and click ‘save’ again.

The admissions office will screen your file based on this information. It is in your best interest to fill this out as accurately as possible.

Please only mention **diplomas that you have obtained**. Credits obtained in the context of an exchange program do not qualify.
CLICK ‘CONTINUE’
If you have listed (all) your higher education diploma(s) under ‘my higher education’, click ‘continue’.
STEP 4: SOCIAL SERVICES

NOT APPLICABLE FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS
Please note that this page is specifically designed for Belgian students. You can ignore this part and click 'save'.

CLICK ‘SAVE’
STEP 5: PROGRAM REQUEST

Select the programs of your choice on this page.

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM
First you are asked if you will receive a scholarship for your program. You will need to submit proof of this later. You **cannot apply** for a scholarship on this page.

Please leave this section **blank**. Filling out this page might create a technical error. **You can ignore this part and click ‘save’**.

Students who have been granted a scholarship can upload the document later at step 6, ‘Document checklist’. It can be uploaded as extra document. If there is no room left, it can also be sent to [admissions@vub.ac.be](mailto:admissions@vub.ac.be).

WORKING AND STUDYING
Once you have filled out the scholarship information, you can opt for taking day or evening classes. Note that this is not applicable for PhD students. Select ‘Day classes’ and, as your work situation, ‘Not applicable’. Leave the other two options **open**.

CHOICE OF PROGRAM
Finally, you need to indicate the program of your choice.

Choose your program and select the type of study.

Please do **not** tick the box ‘This is my first enrolment within Flemish Higher Education’.

Please do **not** tick the box ‘[…] to combine enrolments’.

**TIP:** If you **cannot** find your desired training level, set the course filter to ‘admission by file’ instead of ‘on the basis of my prior education’.

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TIP: If you cannot find your desired training level, check if you have saved your previous higher education, if the scholarship field is filled out (if so, leave it blank) and whether you have selected day classes. All these parameters influence the number of choices in your program request.

After having indicated your course load and the registration period, you have to choose the training level. Select 'Ph.D.' (see picture above).

Afterwards, you have to select your faculty.

Afterwards, you can select your programme. For the course plan, indicate ‘Standaard traject’ or ‘Default track’.

Click ‘SAVE’
**STEP 6: DOCUMENT CHECKLIST**

This page contains an overview of all the required documents. These documents need to be uploaded in PDF or JPEG format.

If you do not possess the required documents yet, these can be uploaded later in your Student Self Service. Once you have uploaded (all) the documents, click “Save” and then “Continue”.

For more information regarding the required documents in general, you can consult this link.

These documents are required:

- Passport photo
- Identity card or passport
- Research topic and Research proposal
- Document ‘Application form Registration PhD’ (without this **signed** document, your application is invalid)
- CV
- Diploma
- If you are applying in the framework of a joint PhD, please mention this in the uploaded documents.
- Chinese nationals who obtained a degree in China will also need an APS-certificate

**TIP:** If you did not obtain your bachelor diploma yet, use a registration certificate instead and provide us with preliminary grade sheets.
STEP 7: INTAKE SURVEY

Please note that this page is specifically designed for Belgian students. You can ignore this part and click ‘save’.

STEP 8: FINISHING YOUR APPLICATION

You can now finish your application!

CLICK ON THE GREEN “FINISH” BUTTON

Click on the green ‘Finish’ button to submit your application.

TIP: Once you have clicked on the button, your application will be mentioned with the status ‘waitlist’ or ‘application’.

TIP: Only click on the finish button once per program request. If you applied for the same program twice, try not to finish it at the end. You will receive every communication twice, which may cause confusion.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I CANNOT FINISH MY APPLICATION, NOW WHAT DO I DO?
If you get an error message while you try to finish your application, send an e-mail to admissions@vub.ac.be in which you mention your temporary user account.

WHEN WILL MY FILE BE SCREENED?
As soon as we have received your application, your file will be placed on the screening list. Depending on the number of application files, it can take up to 4 weeks to get your file screened.

WHERE CAN I CHECK THE STATUS OF MY FILE?
You can check the status of your file by logging in to the Student SelfService with your temporary user account. If you click on ‘Admissions and registration’, you can see where your file is currently at.

HOW CAN I ADD DOCUMENTS TO MY APPLICATION FILE?
You can log in to your Student SelfService with your temporary user account. Navigate to Main Menu > Self Service > Student Admission > Self Service enrolment, select the program you applied for and click ‘continue’. You can upload documents by clicking the paperclip icon.

I GET AN ERROR MESSAGE WHEN I TRY TO UPLOAD DOCUMENTS, HOW CAN I COMPLETE MY FILE?
You can send your extra documents to admissions@vub.ac.be. We will add them to your application file and send you a notification when we have done so.

HOW LONG WILL THE APPLICATION PROCESS TAKE?
Your file will be screened by 3 different parties, more if your file needs extra documents. Therefore, it can take up to 2 months to get your application result. However, you will be updated of each step of the process via e-mail.

I APPLIED FOR THE WRONG PROGRAM, CAN I SWITCH PROGRAMS?
If you noticed you applied for the incorrect program, please fill out the application website again using your temporary user account. If you send an e-mail to admissions@vub.ac.be, we will cancel the incorrect application.

MY QUESTION IS NOT LISTED?
Send us an e-mail at admissions@vub.ac.be.