



Switching from blended to digital-
only international student
recruitment strategies in a fast-
moving pandemic-situation



VRIJE
UNIVERSITEIT
BRUSSEL

The background consists of a solid blue field on the left and a diagonal split with a solid orange field on the right. The text is centered in the blue area.

VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT BRUSSEL
AN INTRODUCTION

FACTS AND FIGURES

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- Medium-sized, international-minded university
- 4+ campuses ~ main campus 'Etterbeek'
- 8 faculties



18,500 students

23,5%

international students



11%

Non- EEA students

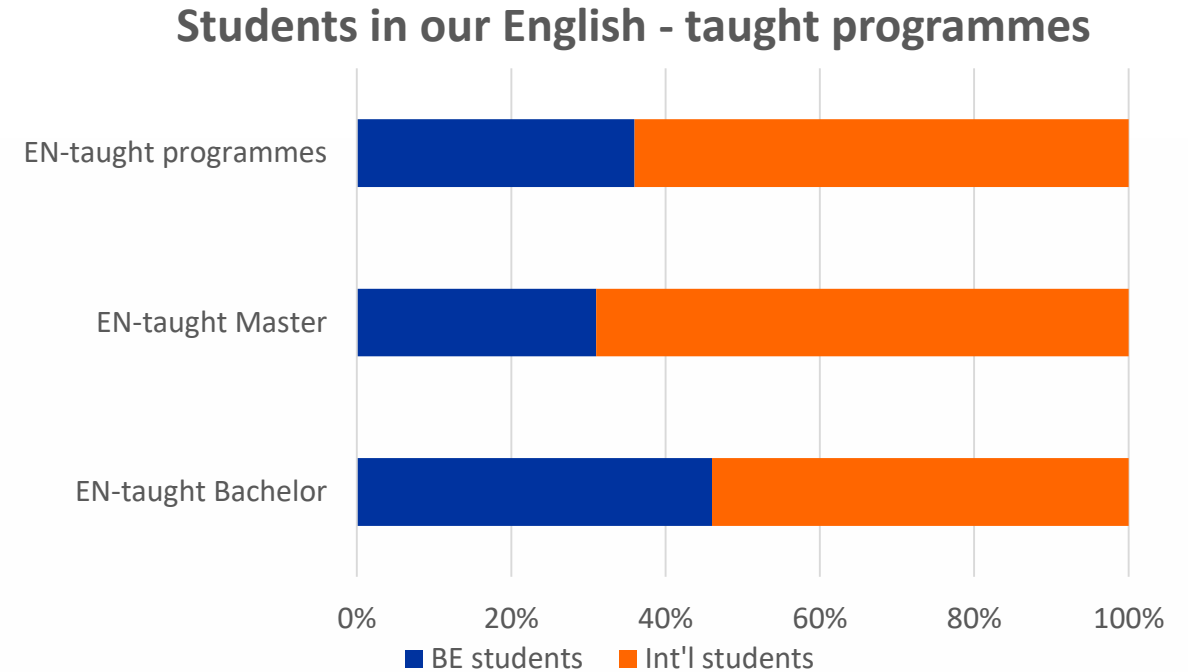
12,5%

EEA students

145 nationalities

ENGLISH - TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

- **2 bachelor's programmes**
- **31 master's programmes**
- 6 advanced master's programmes
- 13 postgraduate certificate programmes
- PhD in 30+ study areas



MARKETING & RECRUITMENT

INTERNATIONAL RECRUITMENT STRATEGY BEFORE PANDEMIC

RECRUITMENT CHANNELS

- Online portals
- Recruitment agents
- Physical fairs
- Partnerships: Outgoing & incoming delegations;
Campus promotion "Study at VUB" at partner universities;
joint programmes
- Alumni events
- On-campus summer schools



INTERNATIONAL RECRUITMENT STRATEGY DURING PANDEMIC

- No participation in recruitment fairs
- No outgoing & incoming delegations
- Alumni events: No physical get-togethers
- Summer schools: only a few online
- Recruitment agents
 - Communication is key
- Marketing partners
 - More budget towards programme listing
 - Adapted marketing tools: DEM, remarketing campaigns, etc.



SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

VUB International Relations
15 June · 🌐

Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) offers 35+ English-taught programmes at affordable prices. We're hosting online info sessions so you can learn more about your study programme & talk to our staff.
🔔 Don't miss this opportunity! Book your online info session now!

The image shows a social media post from VUB International Relations. The main text promotes 35+ English-taught programmes at affordable prices and mentions online info sessions. A call to action asks users to book an online info session. The post includes two images: a woman sitting on the floor with a laptop and a VUB logo graphic.

VUB International Relations
27 April · 🌐

Fancy a career in Economic Diplomacy or International Business? Learn more about the Brussels Diplomatic Academy at VUB (BDA) Postgraduate Programmes, described by alumni as 'sophisticated' with 'outstanding teaching' and 'a unique value proposition'.
=>Your future in Diplomacy and International Trade starts here 🙌

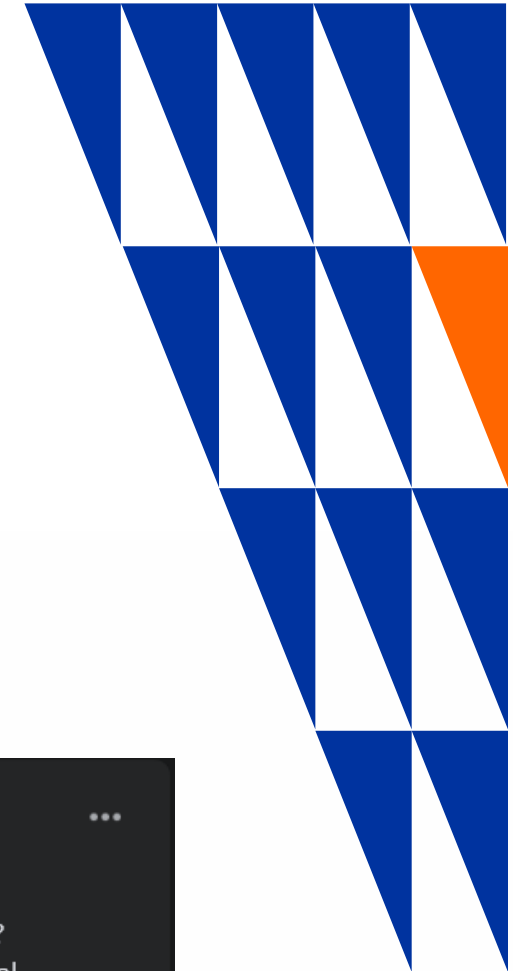
Postgraduate Programmes – Brussels Diplomatic Academy
"If you are thinking about making a valuable c..."

Postgraduate Programr Diplomatic Academy
"If you are thinking about m..."

The image shows a social media post from VUB International Relations. The main text promotes the Brussels Diplomatic Academy (BDA) Postgraduate Programmes, described by alumni as 'sophisticated' with 'outstanding teaching' and 'a unique value proposition'. A call to action asks users to book an online info session. The post includes two images: a group of graduates in blue gowns and caps standing in a hall, and a man and a woman sitting on a blue sofa.

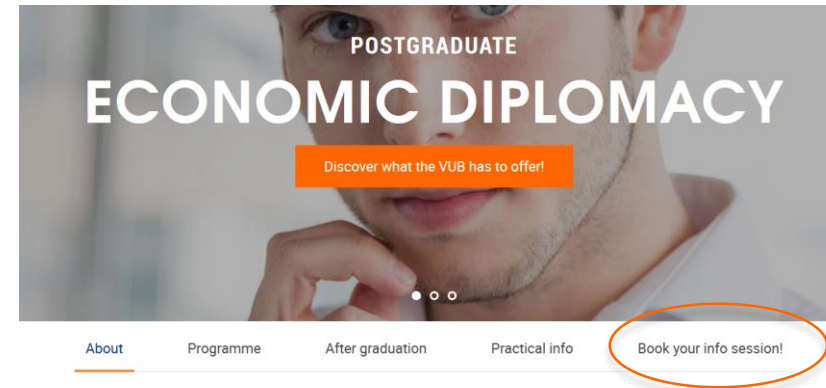
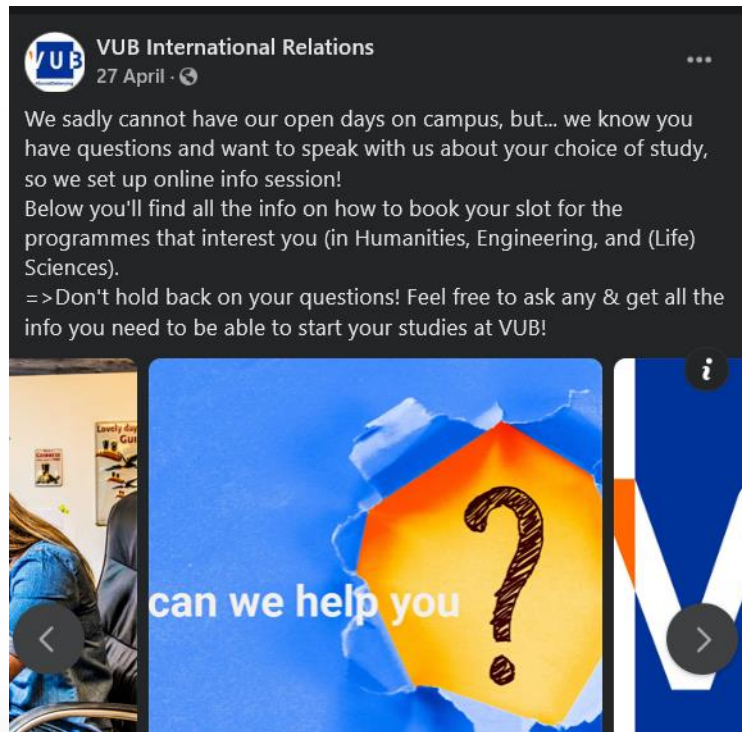
VUB International Relations
9 May · 🌐

🤔 Considering a master's degree in ENGINEERING?:
⚙️chemicals & materials 🏗️civil 🏠architectural ⚡electrical?
Or looking for a master's degree in 💡 photonics, 🧬 biomedical engineering or 💻 applied computer science?
=>You can study it all in English in Europe's Capital. Book your online info session now 🙌

The image shows a social media post from VUB International Relations. The main text asks if the user is considering a master's degree in engineering, listing various fields like chemicals & materials, civil, architectural, electrical, photonics, biomedical engineering, and applied computer science. A call to action asks users to book an online info session.

ONLINE INFO SESSIONS

- Programme-specific sessions
- General sessions



ADMISSIONS

WHICH REQUIREMENTS CHANGED?

Application deadlines

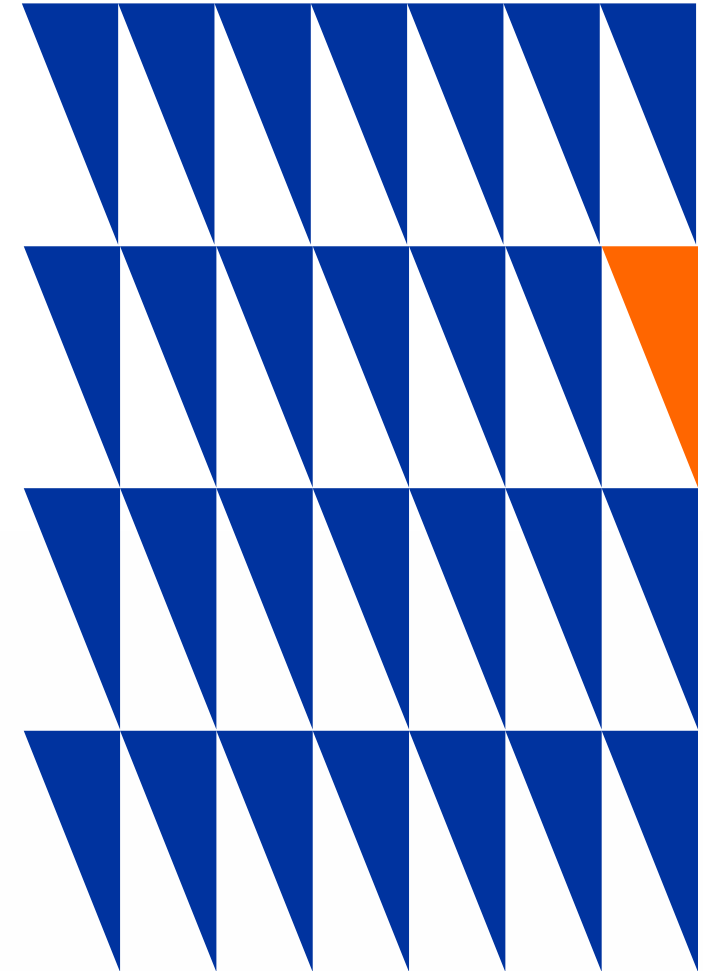
- ▶ 1 April for Non-EEA students (student visa)
- ▶ 1 September for EEA students (+Non-EEA with valid residence permit)

Language requirements

- ▶ Language test: TOEFL iBT Special Home Edition + IELTS Indicator
- ▶ Interview to assess English proficiency

Online enrolment

- ▶ Conditional letter of acceptance: confirmation diploma



COMMUNICATION

COVID-19 UPDATES




Why does Belgium have so many Coronavirus deaths?

Belgium had the worst response to the coronavirus crisis among OECD countries, EIU says

PUBLISHED WED, JUN 17 2020 7:08 AM EDT

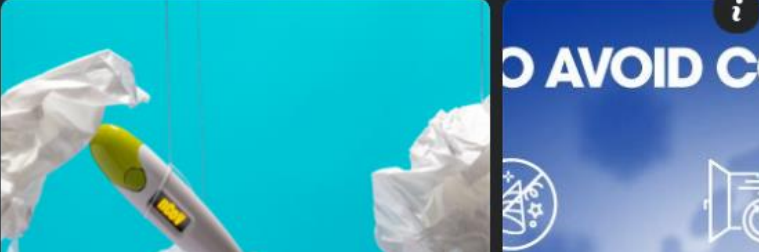
Coronavirus: Why so many people are dying in Belgium

By Gavin Lee
BBC News, Brussels

 **VUB International Relations**
18 March · 🌐

⚠️ **Coronavirus situation update:** the government's additional measures were introduced today. VUB has also taken extra measures and informed students and staff. Our Rector added a message for all as well.

=> Check today's updates for staff and students on the link below.
=> There is a specific update for students who cannot leave their student accommodation & what they should, with a link to a dedicated Facebook group.
=> Please check our Coronavirus website regularly for up... [See more](#)



Going Abroad After Graduation Admission **Covid-19 measures**

COVID-19

More information on the possible measures concerning Covid-19 for academic year 2020-2021.

The Master of Science in Biology will be organised in the academic year 2020-2021. Depending on the situation and possible travel restrictions, online alternatives can be offered during the first semester.

We are aware of the possibility that: (1) many of our international students may not be able to physically join us in Brussels at the beginning of the academic year (September 2020) and (2) that new lockdown measures might force us to fall back to long-distance (digital-only) solutions for all of our students.

WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING?

**GREETING
IN TIMES OF
CORONA**

**I DON'T NEED A HANDSHAKE
FOR A WARM WELCOME**

VUB.BE/CORONAVIRUS

NEWS

VUB engineers tackle imminent shortage of ventilation equipment

Published on 24 March 2020



👉 This week the VUB's Insta account is run by [redacted] a Bachelor in Social Sciences student. He's sharing how he deals with confinement & the creative ideas he has living a student life at home 🤖
=> 📺 Find out more on Insta @vubrusssel #TogetherApart #Coronatimes #StayAtHome #WeareVUB #VUB50 #weekof #weekvan



STUDENT.VUB.BE
Live Q&A sessions by Study Guidance
Live Q&A sessions by Study Guidance



vubrusssel

Following

3,284 posts · 13.1k followers · 249 following

@VUBrusssel

School

Life at the university through the eyes of professors, researchers and students.

👉 This week [redacted] student in quarantine

www.vub.be/mode/2172

Followed by [euliers_rstovcovsk](#) [gimicje_hyrtabian](#) + 100 more



Campus life



Events



Science



VUB racing ...



Vublok



Pilar

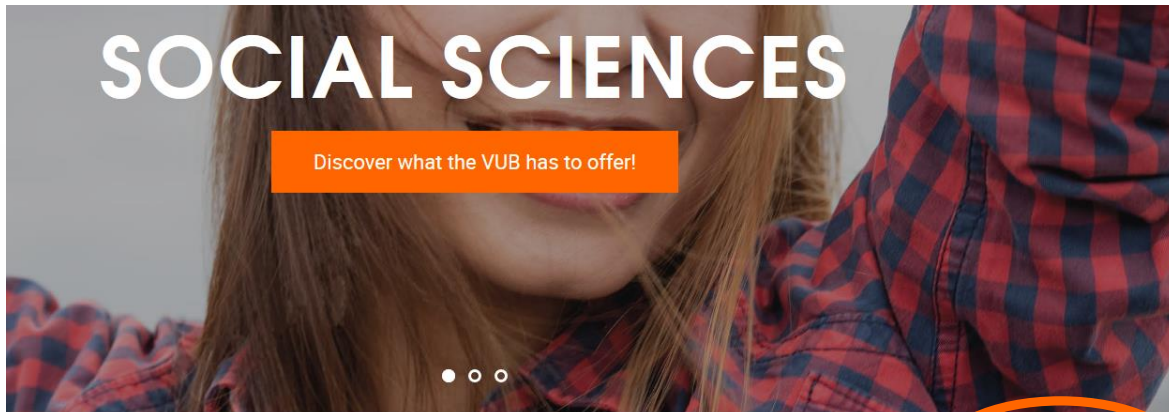


OO19

POSTS



ACADEMIC YEAR 2020-2021



[Programme](#)

[Admissions](#)

[FAQ](#)

[After graduation](#)

[About us](#)

[Next academic year](#)



Back to campus - FAQ

[What happens if a case of coronavirus is detected at the VUB?](#)

[How do you inform the VUB if you think you are infected with the coronavirus?](#)

[When do I notify the VUB?](#)

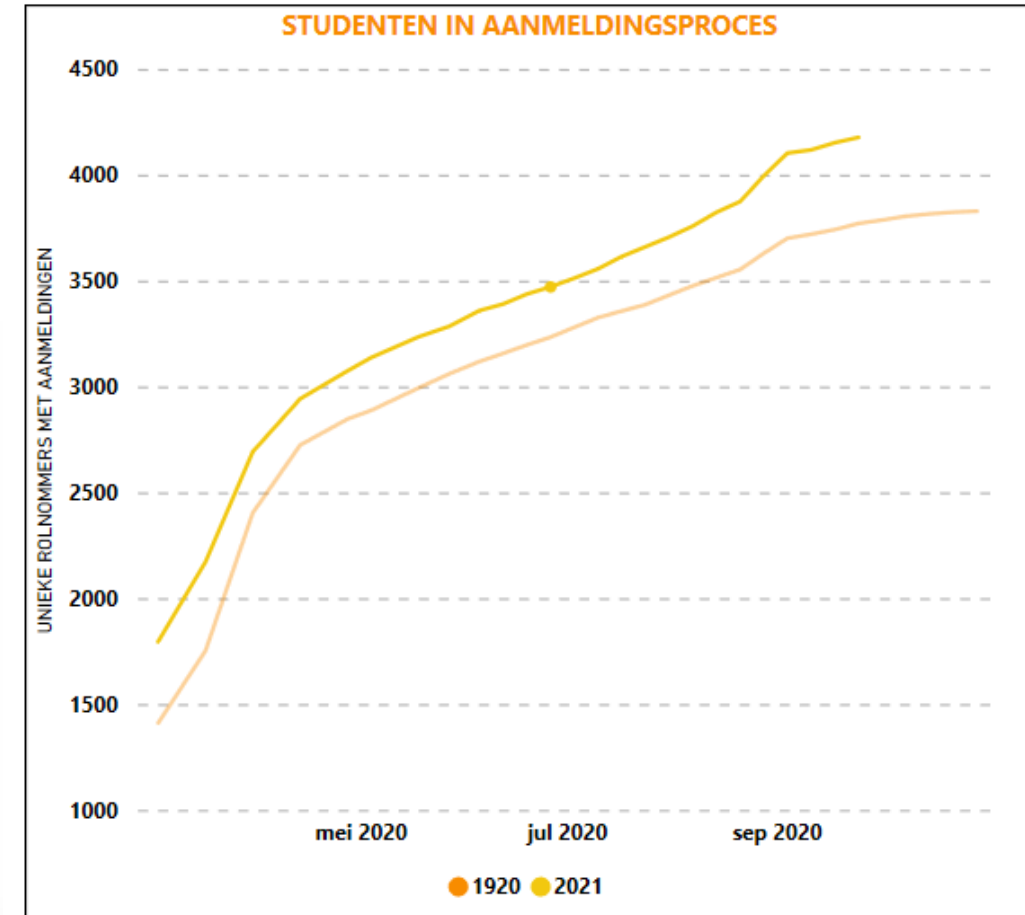
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

STUDENT NUMBERS

RESULTS OF OUR EFFORTS

- Number of applications similar to previous year
- Enrolments are higher **but** much can still change
 - Programme deadline to arrive on campus
 - Deferral option for accepted students 20-21

What is the impact of the (ongoing) pandemic on our student population? **Only time will tell**



INTERNATIONALISATION AND COVID-19

RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS WORKING GROUP

WHAT PRACTICE ARE WE SEEING IN COMMUNITIES, INSTITUTIONS, POLICIES?

Understanding crisis-response measures

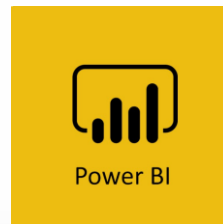
Collective Sense-making



MOVING FORWARD

FUTURE ACTIONS (?)

- **Data-driven marketing & recruitment**
 - **Recruitment fairs**
 - Physical & virtual
 - External representation (alumni and embassies)
 - **Online info sessions**
 - **More/better internal communication**
- **Lead nurturing**
 - **Chatbots**
 - **Flexible admission**
 - Language requirements
 - Deferral option



Booth Representatives



Daisy Bocchi (You)

International marketing and recruitment officer - Vrije
Universiteit Brussel

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RECRUITMENT IS IMPORTANT.
COMMUNICATION IS KEY. WE ARE MOVING FORWARD.
AND ALL IN THE SAME DIRECTION.





**THINKING MUST
NEVER SUBMIT ITSELF.**



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UNIVERSITEIT
BRUSSEL

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