

Master of Science in Sustainable Development



Welcome guide 2024-2025

Welcome to the ICP Master of Science in Sustainable Development!

This welcome guide will give you the necessary information to prepare your arrival to Leuven. It contains information on the programme, academic life and everyday life in Belgium and Leuven.

You can help us to improve this guide for the next generation of incoming students. If you think vital information is missing, or some information is incomplete you can send an email to constanza.parra@kuleuven.be

Table of contents

1. The programme.....	4
1.1. The programme in a nutshell.....	4
1.2. Structure of the programme.....	5
1.3. Elective courses.....	6
1.4. Individual Study Program (ISP)	6
1.5. Individual Examination Schedule (IES).....	7
1.6. The Sustainable Development Living Lab and Internship	8
1.7. Master thesis	9
2. Institutional set-up	10
2.1. Organizing institutions and faculties	10
2.2. Ombudsprogram.....	10
2.3. Evaluation and feedback	10
3. First days in Belgium	12
3.1. Arrival in Belgium.....	12
3.2. Orientation international students.....	12
3.3. Introduction and first classes	13
3.4. Transport in Leuven.....	13
3.5. Living in Leuven.....	14
4. Atlas student union.....	15
5. Teaching, research and exams	16
5.1. Course schedule.....	16
5.2. Location of the lectures.....	16
5.3. Structure of the academic year.....	16

5.4. Grading system.....	17
5.5. Virtual learning environment Toledo	18
5.6. Library and online access	18
5.7. Accommodations for special target groups.....	18
5.8. Academic writing.....	19
5.9. Examination regulations	20
5.10. Code of conduct (classroom behaviour)	20
6. Student support services.....	22
6.1. Student medical services.....	22
6.2. Study support.....	22
6.3. Housing Service.....	22
6.4. Social Service	22
6.5. International students	22
6.6. Student job.....	23
6.7. Student mobility	23

1. The programme

1.1. The programme in a nutshell

The ICP Master in Sustainable Development is a research-driven educational program that prioritizes ethics, gender, and diversity, aiming to prepare future sustainability leaders. Its main objective is to train students to become the agents of change that will imagine, trigger, and build the sustainability transition of the twenty-first century in the Global South, addressing the shortage of sustainability experts in these regions and communities. The program's distinctive strength lies in its interdisciplinary approach, bridging societal and ecological sustainability challenges and transcending the dualistic perspective on nature and society that is common in contemporary education, research, development cooperation, and public policy within the sustainability and resilience field.

This Master program offers a transversal core curriculum in sustainable development and two specialized tracks: a Space & Society track and an Ecology track. The core curriculum emphasizes foundational knowledge in sustainable development theory, methodology, and practical applications in ecology and social science, with components such as academic training, diverse sustainability courses, individual research work, a field trip in the Global South, an internship, thesis writing, and a practical sustainable development workshop. The Space & Society track focuses on societal aspects of sustainability transition, encompassing social, economic, political, and cultural dimensions. The Ecology track focuses on biodiversity conservation and sustainable biodiversity usage across different organizational levels (species, genes, ecosystems). Integration between both tracks will mainly be done through sustainable development practice at the local community level.

The Sustainable Development Living Lab functions as a mobile platform for the ICP community to apply sustainability knowledge to Global South challenges, fostering dialogue and co-learning among diverse stakeholders involved in sustainable development creation, implementation, governance, and assessment. This collaborative approach aligns with the Master's transdisciplinary objectives and involves students, KU Leuven staff, Global South partner institutions from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, as well as practitioners, policymakers, NGOs, and private sector representatives. In essence, the Master program integrates sustainability and development principles, actively engaging with real-world contexts and communities on their sustainability journey.

1.2. Structure of the programme

The overview of all courses in the program can be found here: [ICP Master of Science in Sustainable Development](#)

Common interdisciplinary core programme

The common core program offers essential expertise in sustainable development, covering theory, methodology, and practical applications. It includes academic leveling courses, modules on various dimensions of sustainable development, an individual portfolio, a field trip to the Global South (the Sustainable Development Living Lab) or an internship, and a thesis.

Strengthening courses

The program offers three strengthening courses: "Introduction to Cartography" (required for all students), "Introduction to Geoprocessing" (specifically for ecology track students) and Qualitative Research Methods (specifically for space and society track students). Students who did not take these courses or similar ones previously must include them in their Individual Study Program. Those who completed these courses or similar ones before can substitute the credits with elective courses. For inquiries about "Introduction to Cartography," please contact anton.vanrompaey@kuleuven.be, and for "Introduction to Geoprocessing," contact ate.poorthuis@kuleuven.be

Specializations

Every student applies for a particular track upon admission. Admission is specific to the chosen track and cannot be changed. If unsure about the track you have been admitted to, please contact constanza.parra@kuleuven.be

Space and Society track

The focus of this track is on the societal aspects of sustainability transition, encompassing social, economic, political, and cultural dimensions. These dimensions are examined in relation to the environment and ecology from a territorial and multi-scalar perspective. Students in this track will tackle the challenge of applying conceptual discussions on sustainable development to analyze concrete issues such as climate change, energy transition, biodiversity, water and soil management, urban and neighborhood development, sustainable tourism, disaster resilience, land use, food security, alternative agricultural practices, forest governance, and more. These discussions include considerations of natural resource use, ownership, and management, and their impact on both biophysical and social

environments. Analytical perspectives covered in this track include governance of socio-ecological systems, social sustainability and innovation, environmental justice, political ecology, political economy, ecological economics, resilience, and North-South relations.

Ecology track

This track focuses on biodiversity conservation and sustainable biodiversity use across all levels of organization (species, genes, and ecosystems). Students will learn to analyze how anthropogenic disturbances such as land use changes, water and soil pollution, introduction of exotic species, and climate change can impact biodiversity. Additionally, the track aims to raise awareness about the critical role of biodiversity in supporting essential services provided by natural and semi-natural ecosystems to humans and society, including crop pollination, genetic resource preservation, soil development, climate regulation, and water purification. Graduates will be equipped to identify and analyze key anthropogenic factors contributing to biodiversity loss and the decline of ecosystem services at local and regional scales. They will also be prepared to propose and implement mitigation strategies.

1.3. Elective courses

As outlined in the course structure, there are some courses that you can select yourself. This gives you the opportunity to choose optional courses that align with your personal research project, enhance specific expertise, or explore a new subject area. While there is a list of suggested elective courses in the study program guide, you have the freedom to select from the entire university curriculum with the following conditions:

- The elective course should align with the overall learning objectives of the program.
- You must meet any prerequisite requirements for the course (feel free to reach out to the course organizer if you have any questions).
- The elective course should not overlap with any compulsory courses in your schedule.

If you have any uncertainties about whether your elective course is suitable, you can email constanza.parra@kuleuven.be for guidance.

1.4. Individual Study Program (ISP)

The Individual Study Program (ISP) is a feature in [KU Loket](#) that enables you to enroll in the courses you plan to take throughout the academic year, encompassing both compulsory and elective courses.

The deadline for submitting your ISP is the third Wednesday of the academic year, after which no further changes can be made. Detailed information about the process can be found on the following website: [The Individual Study Programme \(ISP\)](#)

Prior to finalizing your ISP, we recommend watching this informative video on the ISP procedure: [How do I complete my ISP?](#)

When preparing your ISP, consider the following guidelines:

- Only include the compulsory courses required for your chosen track.
- You must accumulate a minimum of 120 credits to fulfill graduation requirements.
- The ISP is available for selection on an annual basis, with credit booking limited to the current academic year (approximately 60 credits per year).
- Any study program extending beyond 120 ECTS credits will incur a fee of 11.40 euros per additional credit.
- Successful completion of all courses within your ISP, including electives or additional courses, totaling at least 120 ECTS credits over the master's program duration, is necessary for graduation.
- We recommend evenly distributing the workload across the two academic years for optimal academic success.

1.5. Individual Examination Schedule (IES)

The Individual Examination Schedule (IES) is a tool within KU Locket that enables students to view and select their examination times. To access exam slots, courses must first be preliminarily registered in the ISP. Once this step is completed, examination times will be visible in the IES. According to the IES page: "On September 13th students will be able to consult any assigned examinations. At the start of the academic year (September 27th) students can choose exam slots for other courses or switch the previous assigned moments." Students who design a clash-free schedule when submitting their ISP will ensure a clash-free exam schedule for both January and June exams. It is important to note that exam slots fill up quickly, so it is recommended to promptly select exam times to customize your examination schedule to your preferences.

For further details on the IES, visit: [The Individual Examination Schedule \(IES\) and the exam schedule](#)

1.6. The Sustainable Development Living Lab and Internship

As part of your course selection, you will have the opportunity to choose between two exciting courses: The Sustainable Development Living Lab and the Sustainable Development Internship. Both are described below.

The Sustainable Development Living Lab, which represents a significant methodological innovation within the program, serving as the primary platform for the interdisciplinary application of sustainable knowledge to Global South challenges by the ICP master community. This dynamic Lab encourages encounter and dialogue among various stakeholders engaged in the implementation and assessment of the Master's development goals, including students, alumni, KU Leuven professors, Global South partners, practitioners, policymakers, and representatives from relevant institutions and the private sector.

Operating as a mobile entity, the Lab can travel to new locations, such as becoming an antenna or spin-off in a VLIR-UOS priority Global South country with existing KU Leuven projects. By linking training on sustainable development with field research and addressing the pressing needs of the Global South, the Lab aims to foster collaborative exploration and co-creation of sustainable solutions. While annually traveling to a partner country for practical application of classroom knowledge, students work in teams, conducting data collection, critical analyses, policy recommendations, and gap identification in collaboration with local stakeholders and communities. The Living Lab has previously visited the Ndumo Game Reserve in South Africa and engaged in a comparative case study in Leuven due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with a recent edition in Vietnam in partnership with the Vietnam National University Hanoi.

Students are expected to contribute to the cost of participating in the Living Lab, covering expenses such as plane tickets, food, accommodation, and local transport. The program is working to secure more funding in order to minimize the daily expenses as much as possible.

The aim of the Sustainable Development Internship is to acquire relevant applied competencies in the field of sustainable development in a company, government institution, international organization, NGO, research institution or other type of organization through an internship. Students need to report their experiences and learning process verbally and in writing. Additional objectives are to exercise social skills, to develop attitudes such as flexibility, the ability to organize, to be critical and proactive, to cope with stress, as well as to be geared towards results.

For further details on the internship, visit: [Internship](#)

1.7. Master thesis

The Master's thesis entails conducting independent research with the support of a supervisor and other department staff at the host university or external supervisors with a PhD. It is preferable for the topic to align with departmental specialties and the internship. The thesis includes a theoretical framework and empirical data analysis. The latter implies the gathering of primary or secondary data for a particular research area(s), analysis of the data using specific, scientific methodologies, and interpretation of the results, as well as the formulation of policy recommendations. A report must be written, and a presentation is required.

For further details on the master thesis, visit: [Master thesis](#)

2. Institutional set-up

2.1. Organizing institutions and faculties

The Master of Science in Sustainable Development is organized by the Division of Geography and Tourism (Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences) and the Division of Ecology, Evolution and Biodiversity Conservation (Department of Biology). Both Divisions are part of the KU Leuven Faculty of Sciences and the Science, Engineering and Technology group.

More information on the different divisions and departments can be found here:

- [Division of Geography and Tourism](#)
- [Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences](#)
- [Division of Ecology, Evolution and Biodiversity Conservation](#)
- [Department of Biology](#)
- [Faculty of Science](#)
- [Faculty of Bioscience Engineering](#)
- [The Science, Engineering and Technology Group](#)

2.2. Ombudsprogram

The ombudsperson plays a crucial role in ensuring compliance with exam regulations, facilitating special exam arrangements and deferrals, participating in deliberations, and acting as a mediator during conflicts or issues related to exams.

For the Master of Science in Sustainable Development, the ombudsperson is Wossen Gebreyohannes Balcha, who can be contacted at ombuds.master.icp.sd@kuleuven.be.

2.3. Evaluation and feedback

KU Leuven has a culture of appreciation of education: educational quality assurance and enhancement are self-evident. Each educational programme at the KU Leuven has a Programme Committee that takes care of teaching quality and enhancement together with the active student participation. The frequent meetings of the Programme Committee enable to identify and remedy rapidly any specific problem. The Programme Committee hosts all the professors involved in the programme as well as a representation of the students and teaching assistants. It is a crucial platform for discussions on course content, overlap, work

forms and students' evaluation tools, as well as for resolving conflicts and the improvement of the quality of teaching.

Next to the Programme Committee, the Steering Committee is responsible for the organization of the programme and takes decisions that set its direction in the longer term. The Steering Committee consists of the promoters, as well as the members of the core group which represents the different main contributors of the courses from the different tracks, a representative from the South partners, and two student representatives (one of each year).

Next to these formal structures, the Living Lab, the monitoring of the individual portfolios, field trips, and dialogues with Global South partners offer opportunities to continuously assess and improve the program. The strength of this program is the diversity of its educational methods and tools, which allow for high interaction with students.

The student representative will be the spokesperson for the entire group of students and will be elected in the beginning of the academic year. She or he will be a member of the Education Committee. If any issues emerge during the academic year, fellow students can contact their representative who will communicate with the involved staff.

The election of the student representative will be organized at the beginning of the academic year.

3. First days in Belgium

3.1. Arrival in Belgium

For those arriving at Brussels National Airport (also known as Zaventem), keep an eye out for the KU Leuven banner and welcome desk in the Arrivals Hall. After going through baggage claim, you will find the Welcome Desk on your right-hand side. The Welcome Desk will be available from September 9 to September 18, 2024. The staff at the desk can provide you with directions on how to get to the campus.

The easiest way to reach Leuven from the airport is by train. All trains in Belgium are labeled with their final destination, which may extend beyond Leuven. Upon arrival at Brussels National Airport, avoid taking a train to Brussels and instead catch a direct train to Leuven. You can inquire about the first Leuven-bound train departure at the ticket office. It is worth noting that “Leuven” is referred to as “Louvain” in French. Therefore, signs pointing to Leuven or Louvain will guide you in the right direction. Be aware that there is another Belgian town called Louvain-la-Neuve, so do not board a train to that location, as it will take you to a different destination in the French-speaking region of the country. The cost of a ticket from the airport to the Leuven train station is €11.20.

Alternatively, you can opt to take a taxi from the airport to Leuven. This is a convenient choice if you have a lot of luggage, as the taxi will drop you off directly at your destination. The fare for a taxi ride from the airport to Leuven ranges from €40 to €60, depending on your final stop and the type of vehicle. Sharing a taxi with other students can make this option more cost-effective. You may encounter fellow KU Leuven students at the KU Leuven welcome desk in the airport's arrival hall.

3.2. Orientation international students

The KU Leuven organizes orientation days for international students to help you get settled in Leuven. You can find the programme and the registration form on the following website: [Orientation Days](#).

There is also the option to enroll in the [Buddy Programme](#), which pairs you with a local buddy who can help you with settling in and exploring Leuven during your initial weeks.

The Faculty of Science developed an [information guide for international students](#) and a [step-by-step plan for administration](#).

3.3. Introduction and first classes

On the 23rd of September, will host an introductory day that includes a general overview of the program and the first classes of the "academic leveling" course.

During lunchtime, we propose a picnic in the geo garden to have the opportunity to meet more informally. Please bring your own lunch (there is a small cafeteria where you can buy sandwiches and soup on campus).

Program on September 23rd at the [QUADRIVIUM](#) (QDV) – room 03.160 (Please be aware that this schedule is subject to changes):

- 9.30h: Introduction to the Master of Sustainable Development by Prof. Constanza Parra.
- 10.30h: Presentation by the Atlas student union.
- 11.00h: Presentation by VLIR-UOS, promoting collaborations between universities in Flanders and the Global South.
- 11.30h: Introduction to the Academic Levelling Course by Prof. Hanne De Kort.
- 12h: Picnic in the geo-garden.
- 13.45h: Information session on the Arenberg library and information gathering skills.

3.4. Transport in Leuven

When registering, you can choose to buy a bus pass for €20. This pass will be valid for one academic year.

The most efficient way to move around in Leuven is by bike. You can rent a bicycle or buy a second-hand bike at VELO (Hollestraat 1, Heverlee). Renting a second-hand bike will cost you €70 for the entire year (plus a €70 deposit). You can already register in advance at [VELO](#).

KU Leuven, in collaboration with Mobiel 21, wants to get international students on their bikes. Therefore, they organize cycling lessons at the beginning of each academic year. In six lessons you will learn how to ride a bicycle and how to navigate in the city. There are only limited spaces available for biking lessons in English, so you might want to register before your arrival: [Cycling in Leuven](#).

At the different campuses of the KUL, there are different bike repair stands and bike pumping stations. You can find the full list here: [Bicycle](#).

3.5. Living in Leuven

The International Office developed a guide about studying and living in Belgium and Leuven, containing information about practicalities (such as transport, health care, housing...) leisure and student services (such as student counselling services): [Living in Leuven/Belgium](#).

Belgian weather can be unpredictable. September can be warm and sunny, but also chilly and rainy. Before packing, it might be good to check the forecast: [Buienradar](#) and [Meteo](#).

Sustainable City Map Leuven

In the framework of the course "Individual portfolio in Sustainable Development", [Janne Teerlinck](#) (now an alumnus) developed a [Sustainable City Map of Leuven](#).

KU Leuven Green Office

At the Green Office, students and staff collaborate on campaigns, projects, activities, and events to promote sustainability at our university. The Green Office community extends beyond just student employees; anyone passionate about sustainability can participate in a working group, project group, or team of their choosing. At the start of each semester, information about membership opportunities is posted on their website: [Green Office](#).

Geogarden

Since 2018 the collectively created [Geogarden](#) offers a place to meet, eat and relax to researchers and students from different orientations who share the love and passion for gardening and relaxing in a flourishing green environment. It aims not only at growing delicious organic vegetables but also to bring life to the isolated Arenberg Campus and to connect people from the different disciplines in a social and open atmosphere. You can join us with (wo)man power or support without getting hands dirty by joining the crowdfunding group. If you are interested in joining us, there are several options available: you can email geogarden@kuleuven.be, attend one of our scheduled working days listed in the agenda, or reach out to a member of your division or the student group to show you how it works!

Food Saving Leuven

"We are an initiative of young people with the goal to reduce the amount of food wasted in Leuven every day. Therefore, we are building a network of engaged food savers that pick up leftovers and expired or unwanted food from different shops and supermarkets. We also establish distribution points where food can be dropped off and shared with everybody. For more information drop us an email: foodsaving.leuven@gmail.com".

Visit the Facebook page of [Food Saving Leuven](#) or [Join this group](#).

4. Atlas student union

Hello everyone!

We are Nele and Femke and we will be your representatives at Atlas next year. Atlas is the student union for geography, geology, master of sustainable development, and the master of tourism. In Belgium, a student union will organize a wide diversity of activities for you to participate. This can be a party, a city game, a lecture, a guided walk, and so on. There are activities to be found for everyone! Femke and I will organize several activities focused on our course and for all of us to bond. Last year we set up an international potluck, a visit to the European Parliament, a lecture about the Brazilian Cerrado, a workshop to make insect hotels, and a cantus (traditional Belgium drinking night). This year we will try to expand our activities and incorporate your ideas! Beside team SusDev, Atlas has a lot of other teams organizing many amazing events for you to partake in. Make sure to check out our [Instagram](#) and Facebook to stay up to date on all our activities! (It is a new page so there is not much going on at the moment, but this will change once the new school year starts).

To start this new year and help you with all your questions, we are starting up a buddy program. In this program we will create small groups existing of a few first years and two or three second years. Within this group you are free to ask all questions you can think of in relation to the program, living in Leuven, the best places to party or travel, and so on. Not all second years will be in Leuven in the first semester since we have the living lab and an internship, but you can still contact your buddies online. If you want to participate in the program, please fill out this [google form](#).

If you already have some questions about Atlas or anything else, you are free to contact Femke and me on WhatsApp personally, or in this [WhatsApp group](#) we created for the first years. This will be your group so you can ask questions to other classmates, invite people over, organize parties, and so on. We will be there to answer questions directed to us, and let you know about upcoming Atlas events!

We are looking forward to welcoming you all to Leuven next semester!

Greetings,

Team SusDev

Nele (0032471854550) and Femke (0032471044501)

5. Teaching, research and exams

5.1. Course schedule

The course schedule can be found here: [ICP Master of Science in Sustainable Development](#).

For class hours and locations: see the button “Schedule” and choose “1st stage”. You can choose for the week or semester overview. Please note that this course schedule does not include any welcome activities and that it is still subject to minor changes. Locations are indicated by their abbreviation, but the full address appears when you click on it.

This course schedule includes all possible courses of the master program (including courses of both specializations/tracks). You are only required to follow the courses that are included in your Individual Study Program.

5.2. Location of the lectures

Most lectures will take place at the Campus Heverlee, just outside of the city centre: [KU Leuven Campus](#). If you are staying in the city centre, you can take a bus to reach the campus (bus nr. 2 Heverlee Campus) or come by bike. Some courses will take place in the city centre.

5.3. Structure of the academic year

The academic year at KU Leuven is divided into two semesters and formally opens on the last Monday of September. Each semester comprises thirteen weeks of class lectures, followed by a revision period and an examination period. The break during the first semester starts with a two-week break for Christmas and New Year and is followed by a one-week revision period. Since this revision period is rather short, you should expect to study for your first semester exams during the Christmas holiday. The examination period of the first semester consists of three weeks (in January). After this examination period, students get a break of one week.

During the second semester (which starts in February), a two-week break for Easter is provided. Before the examination period of three (to four) weeks in June, students get a revision period of two weeks. The summer break begins after the period of examination deliberations.

Students who do not pass in the January or June examination periods can re-take their exams in the examination period from mid-August until September.

Please note that the Sustainable Development Living Lab is organized during the summer break, after the remedial examination period and before the start of the second academic year (2nd and 3rd week of September).

Overview academic year KU Leuven:

First semester	Second semester	Third examination period
13 weeks class lectures	13 weeks class lectures	6 weeks summer break
2 weeks break (Christmas, New Year)	2 weeks break (Easter)	3 weeks examination
1 week review period	2 weeks review period	1 week deliberation
3 weeks examination	3 weeks examination	1 week break
1 week break	1 week deliberation	

An overview of the different semesters, breaks and bank holidays can be found here: [Academic calendar](#)

5.4. Grading system

Course units at KU Leuven are evaluated on a grading scale of 0 to 20. As an exception, it is also possible for certain course units or parts of course units to have a pass/fail evaluation. Results of courses evaluated on a 0-20 scale are always expressed in the form of an integer. Only for the master's thesis a grade can be awarded with a value of up to one decimal place. Partial grades can be expressed on a different scale than 0-20 and can also use values with decimal places. When determining a course unit's result, standard rounding principles are used unless otherwise announced. To pass a course unit, you need to obtain a grade of at least 10/20, or a "pass" grade in case of a pass/fail evaluation. In that case, you will be awarded a credit for the concerning course unit.

When graduating as a bachelor or master, you will be awarded a level of achievement:

- Cum fructu: if you have obtained a weighted percentage of less than 68%.
- Cum laude: if you have obtained a weighted percentage of at least 68%.
- Magna cum laude: if you have obtained a weighted percentage of at least 77%.
- Summa cum laude: if you have obtained a weighted percentage of at least 85%.
- Summa cum laude with the congratulations of the examination committee: if you have obtained a weighted percentage of at least 90%.

5.5. Virtual learning environment Toledo

[Toledo](#) is short for "TOetsen en LEren Doeltreffend Ondersteunen", or to efficiently support testing and learning. Toledo is the web-based virtual learning environment at the KU Leuven.

Through Toledo students get access to a broad range of online course materials, including course texts, PowerPoint slides, use cases, example materials, links to useful websites, exercises, graphics, and multimedia content. Toledo also offers a variety of communication tools connecting students with instructors: electronic valves, mail, announcements, discussion platforms, and much more. In the digital learning environment Toledo, you can also actively manage your learning process through electronic tests, assignments, group organizations, and an electronic portfolio.

You will receive your username and password after your registration at the KU Leuven. You can find here the [Toledo manual](#) for KU Leuven students.

5.6. Library and online access

For information about the different KU Leuven libraries, you can visit the webpage of the [University Library](#).

Besides the physical collections, the University Library also offers a wide range of paper and electronic collections that can be searched with the e-tool [LIMO](#). With only one query you can search for and in a variety of document materials: printed and electronic books and journals, audio-visual materials, digital files and other types of sources. All search results are presented in one integrated list, as a default ordered by relevance.

5.7. Accommodations for special target groups

Students in exceptional individual circumstances (for example student athletes or students with a disability) can request special accommodation during the academic year (f.e. deviation on the general ISP rules) or during the exam period (f.e. extended time to finalize written exams). You can find all necessary information here:

[Accommodations for special target groups – Student \(kuleuven.be\)](#)

If you are eligible for these accommodations, please finalize your request in KU Loket as early as possible in the academic year. Do not forget to renew your application for every examination period.

5.8. Academic writing

Citing and referencing

The term citation refers to the incorporation and acknowledgement of external sources in a text. Citations are essential for clarifying where existing knowledge ends and the added value generated by the author of a text begins. Referencing concerns the listing of bibliographic sources (which are cited in the text) at the end of an academic piece of writing.

Correct citing and referencing are very important, since this will allow the lecturer and the reader of your work to have a clear idea of the originality of the text and the author's own contribution. Serious violations of the rules on how to properly cite a particular work will result in a sanction: [Sanctioning plagiarism](#).

One can opt for different styles and rules in citation and referencing. Academic journals often apply their own specific formats. Common styles include the Harvard referencing system, APA citation style and MLA citation style. Students can choose which citation styles to use, but they must be consistent (meaning that they cannot use two different citation styles within the same text). You can find all the necessary information here: [Referencing: basic principles](#).

Guides of common citing styles can be found on the internet, for example on the website [Cite This For me](#).

If you have doubts about citing and referencing rules, don't hesitate to contact one of the lecturers or tutors for assistance!

Plagiarism policy

According to article 84 of the education and examination rules, plagiarism is defined as:

“A means of examination fraud consisting of every form of copying the work of others (ideas, texts, structures, images, plans etc.) without using adequate source references. This includes making identical copies as well as copying with slight differences. To apply these regulations, copying your own work without a reference will also be counted as examination fraud.”

When plagiarism is detected in the final version of your paper, the procedure of sanctioning is commonplace, and your teacher will have to report the degree of plagiarism to the examination board. They will investigate whether you really committed plagiarism, and they will investigate the seriousness of the plagiarism. Afterwards, they will discuss the penalty, and they will inform you about their decision. You can appeal against the examination board's decision.

We take plagiarism very seriously! To come prepared, we recommend you to thoroughly read the university's policy, instructions and tips to prevent plagiarism on the following website: [Refer adequately](#).

Necessary skills certificate

The programme expects students, who did not do their bachelor at KU Leuven, to obtain an information skills certificate in the Toledo community “Scientific Integrity at the Faculty of Sciences”.

All students also must obtain the graduate level certificate of Indiana University “How to Recognize Plagiarism?”: [Indiana University Plagiarism Tutorials and Tests](#).

You are expected to upload both certificates in Toledo as part of the course “Academic levelling, space, society and ecology”.

Useful tool: Academic Writing Assistant

The Leuven Language Institute from the KU Leuven has developed the tool [Academic Writing Assistant](#), that offers online help when writing an academic paper. This tool generates suggestions for improvement regarding structure, coherence, and academic level.

5.9. Examination regulations

Consult the KU Leuven [regulations on education and examinations](#).

If you are unable to attend an exam with a valid reason (in case of illness you must present a valid doctor's certificate), you must contact the ombudsperson to reschedule your exam.

5.10. Code of conduct (classroom behaviour)

The ICP student population will be very diverse with students coming from at least 10 different countries. It goes without saying that the educational values and standards of this heterogeneous group vary greatly as well. Coming together in a new educational environment is not obvious. “What about being late? Are we allowed to use mobile phones in class? How to organize an efficient group work?” This code of conduct will try to give an answer to all these kinds of questions.

Being late/academic quarter

All lectures start at the indicated hour. Be on time and consider that buses may have a delay during rush hours! The academic 15' means that you can leave the room if, within 15' after the official start of a class, the lecturer does not show up. You are expected to attend all classes and other official activities such as workshops, discussion meetings, fieldtrips, etc. If you miss a presentation, then this is considered a missing part of the assessment (which may result in a failure for the entire course). When you have a reason to be absent, please

communicate this by email to the lecturer and/or to the tutor. If you miss an important evaluation moment (exam, presentation,.) with a valid reason, you should contact the ombudsperson to reschedule the evaluation. Most of the time, a lecture takes two hours. In general, the lecturer decides for a break (ca. 10') after about an hour. You can't walk out during lectures except for a very urgent reason (feeling ill, etc.).

Use of cell phones/laptops

A phone call is not an urgent reason for leaving the lecture. Cell phones should be switched off during the lectures. It is up to the lecturer to make specific arrangements on the use of laptops and tablets in class. These will be announced during the first class of the respective unit/course. As a rule, unless otherwise mentioned, students are allowed to make use of all electronic devices if they are being used for educational, course-related purposes only. It is not allowed to use laptops or tablets during exams, not even as a calculator or a dictionary, unless otherwise specified.

Group work

Working in a group requires diplomatic skills such as negotiating, deal-making, convincing and respecting others. Other skills involved are professional communication, reaching deadlines and agreements, and dividing work efficiently. Pay significant attention to this and be (or become) aware of your own strengths and weaknesses by asking the other group members for feedback or advice on your participation.

Efficient groups divide tasks and responsibilities quickly and stick to them. Having a power position in the group or trying to get your way however you can, is not a goal. Accept your role and do the best you can in the work that you have to do. Lecturers will notice or try to find out what each individual has contributed.

Ideas and vision are important, but even more so is the practical work to be done. Do not get stuck in endless theorizing or debates. Decisions should be taken consciously and well-thought-out, but fast and efficient. Voting systems can help.

If the group is large, you can divide yourselves into subgroups to tackle issues quickly and effectively. Nevertheless, don't forget to communicate regularly with the entire group. A good group assignment is more than the simple sum of the contribution of each member. To deliver a coherent piece of work, qualitative group work requires constant interaction and effective communication between the different group members.

For substantial group work, it can be helpful to make a group contract at the start in which you clarify and enforce norms. A good example is provided on [Making Group Contracts](#)

6. Student support services

6.1. Student medical services

On the webpage of the KU Leuven health centre, you can find information on all health related issues (general practitioners, mental health, confidential advisor, useful links and telephone numbers): [Health care & well-being](#)

6.2. Study support

The KU Leuven has a study advice centre, offering advice and support on study-related matters: [Your study at KU Leuven](#)

They also developed several online modules to support students during and outside their studies: [KU Leuven Stuvo workshops](#)

They also offer a very informative page on essential academic skills to study at the KU Leuven. Since most of you are not familiar with Belgian academic culture, we would advise you to go through the information on this page before your arrival: [Study essentials](#)

6.3. Housing Service

If you are looking for a room/studio, you can find all necessary information here: [Housing](#)

6.4. Social Service

You can contact the KUL social services for all questions related to practical, financial and legal issues: [KU Leuven Stuvo](#)

6.5. International students

Pangea is the international student service that assist international students with their integration at the university: [Where Worlds Meet](#)

6.6. Student job

Looking for a student job? Or career advice? You can visit the webpage of the KU Leuven career centre: [Looking for a job](#)

6.7. Student mobility

On this page you find all information on funding your stay abroad (internship, fieldwork...) during your studies: [Outgoing student mobility](#)