



STUDENT HANDBOOK

2022-2024

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1. About IMSOGLO

The International Master of Science in Soils and Global Change (IMSOGLO) is offered by a consortium of 4 universities:

- [Ghent University](#), Ghent, Belgium (UGent)
- [Aarhus University](#), Aarhus, Denmark (AU)
- [University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences](#), Vienna, Austria (BOKU)
- [University of Göttingen](#), Göttingen, Germany (UGOE)

Additionally, there are 2 associated partners:

- The Joint Research Centre of the European Union (JRC)
- The Department of Soil Resource and Remote Sensing Applications, Institute of Soil Science, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Nanjing (CAS)

The programme contains 120 ECTS credits and covers 2 years. The full programme can be found on

- <https://studiekiezer.ugent.be/international-master-of-science-in-soils-and-global-change-physical-land-resources-and-global-change-en/2022>
- <https://studiekiezer.ugent.be/international-master-of-science-in-soils-and-global-change-soil-biogeochemistry-and-global-change-en/2022>

The programme has 2 specializations. All students will jointly follow the Soil Fundamentals courses during the 1st semester at UGent and will jointly participate to the Summer Course during the summer between the 1st and 2nd year.

The 1st semester is organized at UGent and starts with a **Primer Event** for all students in which soil types, soil threats and soil instrumentation are shown to identify the main topics of study in soils with reference to global change. Furthermore, students are introduced to the research work done at the 4 partner universities which will help them to define their optional courses for the specialization in the 2nd and 3rd semester. The Primer Event will take place from 19-22 September 2022. Thereafter, 30 ECTS of **Soil Fundamentals** courses are taught during the 1st semester at UGent: Pedology, Soil Chemistry, Soil Physics, Soil Genesis, Land Information Systems, and Applied Statistics.

The specialization “**Soil biogeochemistry & global change**” brings the students to BOKU in the 2nd semester and to UGOE in the 3rd semester:

- The courses at BOKU in the 2nd semester focus on sustainable land management. The 5 mandatory courses (15 ECTS) concentrate on the relation between globalisation, rural development and associated soil problems. Moreover, the students learn how sustainable land use can protect the soils and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. 3 additional ECTS are reserved for Field Work in China (in 2023) or a Summer School at BOKU or other alternative, depending on the COVID19 pandemic. Students have to choose 12 ECTS courses from a list of optional courses.
- The courses at UGOE in the 3rd semester focus on the biogeochemical consequences of global change from an (agro-)ecological perspective. The 4 mandatory courses (18 ECTS) cover different scale levels: landscape dynamics, agricultural biochemistry and soil microbiology. Students have to choose 12 ECTS courses from a list of optional courses.

The specialization “**Physical land resources and global change**” brings the students to UGent in the 2nd semester and to AU in the 3rd semester:

- The courses at UGent focus on natural resources management for resilience to global change. The 4 mandatory courses (19 ECTS) concentrate on the how climate change influences soil performance and how soil management and land use planning can prevent or remediate soil degradation. 3 additional ECTS are reserved for Field Work in China (in 2023) or a Summer School at BOKU or other alternative, depending on the COVID19 pandemic. Students have to choose 8 ECTS courses from a list of optional courses.
- The courses at AU focus on the soil physical and soil-C consequences of global change. The 3 mandatory courses (25 ECTS) concentrate on global soil degradation and ecosystem services, the quantification of soil erosion and on C-cycling and climate change. Students have to choose 5 ECTS courses from a list of optional courses.

During the summer after the 2nd semester, all students come together again for the **Summer Course** which is either

1. a 1 week Field Work in China (associated partner CAS) during which various aspects of soil degradation will be shown (this excursion will be organized bi-annually in alternation with the summer school), or
2. a 1 week Summer School (with contributions from associated partner JRC) during which simulation models and information systems will be used to better understand the present condition of the soil, to obtain insight in the causes of soil degradation, to project possible future soil development and to produce maps of the state of soil functioning.

During the 4th semester, the students perform their **Master Thesis** research (30 ECTS) at one of the partner universities, associated partners, or at an external university/organisation/company. The main academic supervisor of the thesis must be affiliated with one of the two universities involved in your chosen specialization. Students that are affiliated to research institutes can propose to conduct their research there and have a (co-)supervisors from two of the partner universities. All students have a supervisor from one partner university and a co-supervisor from another partner university. The university providing the supervisor will provide 20 ECTS, and the university providing the co-supervisor will provide 10 ECTS.

2. Organizational structure

The IMSOGLO programme is managed by several actors, described below.

2.1. Management Board (MB)

The MB is in charge of the management of IMSOGLO, including the evaluation of the application files of candidate students, the selection of scholarship grantees, financial management, and course programme content. The MB meets at least twice a year; at one meeting the Student Selection Group is present. The composition of the MB reflects its main roles:

2.2. Programme Steering Group (PSG)

The PSG is part of the MB and meets at least 2 times per year and its roles are

- to advise, in annual cycles, on modifications of the programme contents and to monitor the courses in terms of success (passed exams) and marks achieved by students. The PSG is thus important in the Quality Assurance (QA) of the IMSOGLO programme. In particular, the PSG checks, by means of a competence matrix, whether all the IMSOGLO programme end competences are covered by the end competences of the individual IMSOGLO courses.
- to take, react to and implement independent advice from the Education Quality Assurance Committee (EQAC).
- to advise on individual study programmes, selection of elective courses, thesis topics, and nomination of lecturers.
- to deal with individual lectures (e.g., content, relevance, quality of course material, effectiveness in training targeted skills, interaction with the professional sector, etc.), lecturers, difficulties arising from mobility, e.g. problems with examination and teaching schemes, and facilities provided by the consortium to host students.
- to contribute to reports to EACEA at request of the coordinator.

Composition of the PSG: 1 lecturer nominated by each partner university, 1 student per specialization, 1 alumnus. The PSG is chaired by the Coordinator and facilitated by Technical Secretariat (TS).

2.3. Technical Secretariat (TS)

The TS, hosted at the Coordinating Organisation (UGent), is part of the MB and will treat all administrative questions and problems and will be in charge of practical issues, such as: arrival of students (including visa applications), mobility arrangements, administrative tasks concerning study progress, collecting the marks of students, organization of the selection procedure, organization of meetings of the managing bodies, communication, financial reporting and report writing. The TS prepares a ranking of candidates for scholarships, checks the entry level of all incoming students, and submits this to the Student Selection Group for evaluation. The secretariat is further responsible for the design and the follow-up of the IMSOGLO website. This secretariat will work under the guidance of the IMSOGLO Coordinator. At every partner university, there will be a local contact person who will deal with practical issues there and will collaborate with the Technical Secretariat.

The TS can be reached via imsoglo@ugent.be and served as a single point of contact for all questions concerning the IMSOGLO programme.

2.4. Student Selection Group (SSG)

The SSG is part of the MB and meets at annual frequency and its roles are

- to check the entry level of students against the requirements, this involves the type and contents of BSc-level studies as well as language requirements.
- to select scholarship grantees, following the criteria set by EACEA for Erasmus Mundus scholarships. Scholarships are equally distributed over the 2 specializations.

The SSG receives a ranking of candidates for scholarships prepared by the TS, checks and modifies this ranking where this is deemed necessary, and submits the final proposal to the MB for approval.

Composition of the PSG: 1 representative nominated by each partner institution, chaired by the Coordinator and facilitated by the Technical Secretariat.

2.5. Education Quality Assurance Committee (EQAC)

The EQAC is important in the Quality Assurance of the IMSOGLO programme. In particular, the EQAC monitors the quality of the education in the programme, based on formal evaluations of the education, anonymously filled out by students. The EQAC is independent of the MB and submits its advices either at or without request to the MB. Each of the partner institutions is represented in the EQAC.

2.6. Examination Committee (EC)

The EC meets after the exams taken in each semester, via videoconferencing and its roles are

- to convert the scores for individual courses to the UGent grading system (scale 0-20) at the end of each academic year and to submit the outcome to the MB.
- to confirm per student, based on study results, that the degree can be issued by UGent, or under what conditions his/her transition to the next semester can take place.
- to take action in case of irregularities during exams for those cases that the rules of partner institutions might not apply. In general, however, examination codes of the partner institutions prevail for the courses taken at those institutions, including rules for retakes of exams.

Composition of the EC: all lecturers involved in the programme, including the (co-)supervisors of master theses. It is established at UGent, chaired by a chairperson chosen annually from its members and facilitated by the Technical Secretariat.

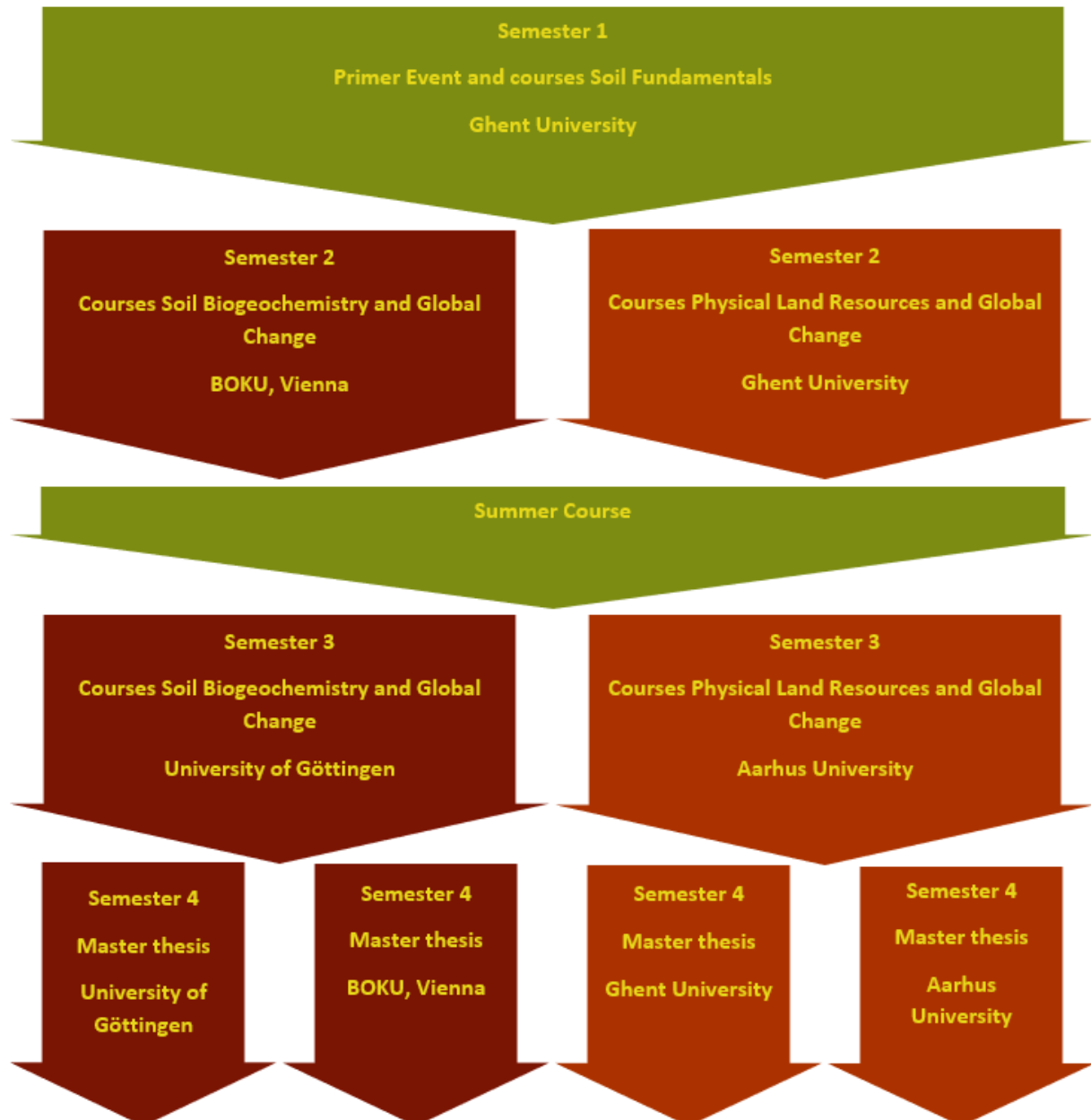
2.7. Coordination University and Coordinator

UGent is the Coordinating University and delivers the IMSOGLO Coordinator (currently prof. dr. Peter Finke), responsible for the overall management and organisation of IMSOGLO, and good functioning of the Consortium and the Technical Secretariat. The Coordinator is also Chair of the Management Board.

3. Academic matters

3.1. Programme structure

The students are residing each semester at one university (or possibly, for the thesis at an associated partner institution). Which universities they will visit depends on the chosen specialization. There are 4 mobility pathways:



3.2. Academic calendar

Physical Land Resources & Global Change 2022 – 2024

Year	Semester	Start date	End date	Mobility	
1	1	01/09/2022	16/09/2022	Arrival, BePrepared@FBE, OnBoarding@FBE	
		19/09/2022	21/09/2022	Ghent University IMSOGLO Primer Event	
		26/09/2022	23/12/2022	Ghent University Mandatory courses (30 ECTS)	
		26/12/2022	06/01/2023	Christmas holidays	
		09/01/2023	03/02/2023	Ghent University Exams	
		06/02/2023	10/02/2023	Inter-semester holidays	
	2		13/02/2023	31/02/2023	Ghent University Mandatory courses (23 ECTS) Two electives (7 ECTS)
			03/04/2023	14/04/2023	Easter holidays
			17/04/2023	26/05/2023	Ghent University Continuation of: Mandatory courses (23 ECTS) Two electives (7 ECTS)
			30/05/2023	07/07/2023	Ghent University Exams
		10/07/2023	18/08/2023	Summer holidays	
		21/08/2023	15/09/2023	Ghent University Resit exams	
2	1	28/08/2023	08/12/2023	Aarhus University Mandatory courses (25 ECTS) One elective (5 ECTS)	
		11/12/2023	15/12/2023	Preparation for exams	
		18/12/2023	26/01/2024	Aarhus University Exams	
		20/05/2024	07/06/2024	Aarhus University Resit exams	
	2		05/02/2024	15/09/2024	Master thesis (30 ECTS) Aarhus University or Ghent University

Biogeochemistry & Global Change 2022 – 2024

Year	Semester	Start date	End date	Mobility	
1	1	01/09/2022	16/09/2022	Arrival, BePrepared@FBE, OnBoarding@FBE	
		19/09/2022	21/09/2022	Ghent University IMSOGLO Primer Event	
		26/09/2022	23/12/2022	Ghent University Mandatory courses (30 ECTS)	
		26/12/2022	06/01/2023	Christmas holidays	
		09/01/2023	03/02/2023	Ghent University Exams	
		06/02/2023	28/02/2023	Inter-semester holidays	
	2		01/03/2023	31/03/2023	BOKU Mandatory courses (18 ECTS) Four electives (12 ECTS)
			03/04/2023	14/04/2023	Easter holidays
			17/xx/2023	14/07/2023*	BOKU Continuation of: Mandatory courses (18 ECTS) Four electives (12 ECTS) Exams (period TBD) *officially the summer semester ends by 30 September at BOKU - courses are finished by 30 June usually
			17/07/2023	25/08/2023	Summer holidays
		28/08/2023	29/09/2023	BOKU Resit exams - depending on teacher's availability, individual arrangements possible	
2	1	23/10/2023	22/12/2023	University Of Göttingen Mandatory courses (18 ECTS) Four electives (12 ECTS)	
		25/12/2023	05/01/2024	Christmas holidays	
		08/01/2024	09/02/2024	University of Göttingen Continuation of: Mandatory courses (18 ECTS) Four electives (12 ECTS)	
		12/02/2024	29/03/2024	University of Göttingen Exams	
	2		01/04/2024	15/09/2024	Master thesis (30 ECTS) BOKU or University of Göttingen

3.3. Programme participation cost and insurance

The IMSOGLO programme participation cost is 4,500 euro per year for Erasmus+ Programme Country students (all EU countries + Iceland, Liechtenstein, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Turkey, UK) and 9,000 euro per year for Erasmus+ Partner Country students (all other nationalities). For Erasmus Mundus Scholarship students, the programme participation cost is paid directly from the scholarship, other students will receive an invoice before enrolment.

The programme participation cost for IMSOGLO includes an all-in insurance policy for foreign students of Ghent University for the full length (24 months) of the master programme, handled by insurance broker Expat & Co, and backed by insurance company Inter Partner Assistance (IPA). The all-in insurance covers medical costs, travel risks, as well as civil liability. EU students should apply for the [European Health Insurance Card](#) in their home country prior to traveling to Belgium.

3.4. Teaching, learning & examination

Teaching methods, learning methods and examination methods are different from university to university and from course to course. If you want to know about the teaching and learning methods or an examination method for a specific course, you can consult the course files.

The student needs to follow the educational and examination code of the university the student is currently residing at.

The Ghent University [regulations concerning study progress monitoring and binding conditions](#) apply to all IMSOGLO students during the complete IMSOGLO programme.

IMSOGLO students as well as the programme management have mutual rights and obligations formalized in the IMSOGLO Student Agreement to be signed before the start of the programme.

3.5. Class schedules

The IMSOGLO Primer Event will be organized from September 19th – 22nd. During this event soil types, soil threats and soil instrumentation are shown to identify the main topics of study in soils with reference to global change. Furthermore, you will be introduced to the research work done at the 4 partner universities which will help you to define your optional courses for the specialization in the 2nd and 3rd semester. On September 21st a BBQ will be organised in the evening to get to know each other and the IMSOGLO staff.

Class schedules of the Ghent University courses will be available on the following pages

- <https://studiekiezer.ugent.be/international-master-of-science-in-soils-and-global-change-physical-land-resources-and-global-change-en/programma/2022>
- <https://studiekiezer.ugent.be/international-master-of-science-in-soils-and-global-change-soil-biogeochemistry-and-global-change-en/programma/2022>

Class schedules and courses of BOKU can be checked in the [BOKUonline education management system](#). Registration for courses and exams can be done after your arrival at BOKU since you need an active BOKUonline account for this purpose. Please note that course details will be published approximately 1 month before the semester start.

The class schedules for courses at Aarhus University and the University of Göttingen will be shared with you later.

3.6. Curriculum and elective courses

Your curriculum for the 1st IMSOGLO year needs to be registered and submitted in oasis.ugent.be by November 1st 2022. You will receive further instructions on how to select your elective courses for the 2nd semester.

Your curriculum for the 2nd IMSOGLO year containing your elective courses needs to be registered and submitted in oasis.ugent.be by November 1st 2023.

Elective courses at partner universities have to be chosen at the beginning of each semester and cannot be changed during the semester. Deadlines for your final choice of elective courses will be communicated by the respective partner university in advance.

Remember that during your 2-year IMSOGLO studies your curriculum submitted in oasis.ugent.be is the one and only valid curriculum. Never register for different courses at other partner universities than the courses in your Oasis curriculum. In case you have questions on your curriculum, contact imsoglo@ugent.be.

3.7. Thesis

Information moments on the possible topics and location of the thesis research are organised

1. during the Primer Event at the start of the 1st semester. At enrolment, students will have chosen their specialization and the involved universities will give information on possible topics and (co-)supervisors for the master thesis during the first year;
2. during the 2nd semester via interactions with possible thesis supervisors.

Before June 1st of the first year, students will submit 2 options for thesis topics to the Management Board (MB). This way, an equal allocation of thesis topics over the partners is pursued.

3.8. Grading systems and grade conversion

All partner universities use a different grading system. Your official Ghent University transcript of records will show your grades in the Ghent University grading system, (0-20 scale). Grades for every semester can be consulted on oasis.ugent.be at the end of every semester. Below you can see how the grades will be converted to the UGent system.

Verbal	Final Score	UGent	AU	BOKU	UGOE
Fail	<10	<10	00/-3	5	≥ 4.3
Sufficient	10	10	02	4	4.0
Satisfactory	11	11	02	4	3.7
Satisfactory	12	12	4	3	3.3
Satisfactory	13	13	4	3	3.0
Good	14	14	7	3	2.7
Good	15	15	7	2	2.3
Very good	16	16	10	2	2.0
Very good	17	17	10	2	1.7
Excellent	18	18	12	1	1.3
Excellent	19	19	12	1	1.0
Excellent	20	20	12	1	1.0

4. Mobility and partner info

4.1. University of Göttingen

Registration at the University of Göttingen

Present yourself at the Göttingen International Office. It is located at International Office, Von-Siebold-Straße 2, 37075 Göttingen. Get informed on the introduction weeks for International students.

The event "Introduction to Studying and Life in Göttingen" as well as the faculty tour are essential for a good start to your studies and it is therefore strongly recommended that you take part in them.

Find all info for international students and the Guide for international students [here](#).

Housing

The Accommodation Service supports international students in their search for a room and serves as point of contact for questions concerning accommodation in Göttingen.

They work together with the Studentenwerk (Student Services) which runs the student halls of residence, with private halls of residence and with private landlords. Moreover, they help students to find accommodation on the private housing market, for example as sub-tenants to students from Göttingen who go abroad for one or two semesters themselves. All information can be found [here](#).

e-mail: accommodation@uni-goettingen.de

Check closely with your calendar to make sure your rental period does not exceed your stay in Göttingen.

Visa and residence permit

You need to present yourself in the New City Hall ([Hiroshimaplatz 1-4](#)) at the Foreigner's Registration Office (Ausländerbehörde, on the ground floor, right hand side) within the first two weeks of arrival.

If you plan to stay longer than 90 days, you will need a residence permit which you have to apply for at the Foreigner's Registration Office (Ausländerbehörde) within the first 90 days of your stay. When applying for it, you must present the following documents (please note, that it may be necessary to submit further documents):

- completed application form
- certificate of enrolment at the University of Göttingen
- proof of financial resources (if applicable/scholarship letter/solvency letter)
- confirmation of health insurance coverage (see econsort)
- valid passport and valid entry visa
- proof of accommodation
- biometric passport photo
- confirmation of registration from the Resident Registration Office
- money for the fee

Find more info [here](#).

In case instructions about visa and residence permits change, you will be informed in time.

4.2. Aarhus University

Registration at Aarhus University

Find all info for international students [here](#) and info about Aarhus University's International Centre [here](#). The International Centre provides services for international students, staff and guests at Aarhus University. You have to register at the International Centre as soon as you arrive. It is located at Høegh-Guldbergs Gade 4A 8000 Aarhus C, Denmark. In addition, we recommend that you participate in our [AU intro days](#), which are organised for all new international students at AU. They offer you the opportunity to ensure a great start of the semester. Please make sure to select the programme for Full degree students – Natural and Technical Sciences.

Registration in Denmark

After you have obtained your residence permit or document, you must apply for your Danish social security number (CPR). All students regardless of their nationality must apply for CPR. Nordic citizens, however, only have to apply if staying in Denmark for more than six months. The CPR number is used when dealing with public authorities, health authorities, libraries, banks and the like. The card with your CPR number is also referred to as your health insurance card or 'yellow card'. If you need medical attention before you receive your CPR number, please contact the International Centre or the emergency room. Find more information about CPR number [here](#).

Housing

Aarhus University Housing Office provides housing for all Erasmus Mundus students. You must apply for housing in Aarhus through AU Housing Office. In due time before your arrival, you will receive an e-mail from a housing officer with information about how to apply. You can also find information about how to apply [here](#).

On-campus accommodation is uncommon in Denmark and therefore students live outside campus and commute to/from campus. Most of the rooms allocated via AU Housing are located within 30 minutes travel from campus. Please be aware that it is not possible to apply for a specific dorm or a specific house. But you can prioritize your preferred type of housing.

Visa and residence permit

For EU/EEA/Swiss citizens a visa-free entry in Denmark is possible. As an EU/EEA/Swiss citizen, you need to apply for a residence document for the duration of your stay in Aarhus. Nordic citizens do not need to apply for residence permit/certificate.

For non-EU/EEA citizens entry in Denmark is possible, if you have a valid EU-Schengen (Belgian) residence card. However, you are not allowed to start your studies, until your application for residence permit is completed and submitted.

You must apply for a residence permit for the duration of their stay in Aarhus before arriving to Denmark through an on-line platform. Aarhus University will send detailed information about this process to you by mail in due time before you can apply. Please be aware that the Danish Immigration Authorities will charge you a processing fee of about 500 euro.

Find more information [here](#). **In case instructions about visa and residence permits change, you will be informed in time.**

4.3. BOKU Vienna

Registration at BOKU

Find **general info** about welcome days, studying at BOKU and living in Vienna for international students [here](#). Current **COVID-19 information** for international/incoming students can be found [here](#).

Please note: [Online pre-registration at BOKU](#) before the deadline of 5 February is required. The pre-registration is usually open by the end of December or the beginning of January.

IMSOGLO students will be informed about further details by e-mail by the administrative coordinator prior their study period at BOKU.

Housing

You can choose to either get a room in the student residences or share a flat. It is important to check closely with your IMSOGLO calendar before booking a room. Book as early as 2-3 months beforehand since the rooms are on a “first come first serve” basis. Housing can be booked via the OEAD housing office (online), you will receive an offer via e-mail and can confirm this offer. The deposits are usually between 750-950 euro. Make sure that your room is guaranteed for the whole stay in Vienna. Find all info on student accommodation in Vienna [here](#) and a list of student residences [here](#). Be aware that IMSOGLO students have to find an accommodation by themselves, BOKU-International Relations cannot provide housing offers.

Registration in Vienna

Immediately after your arrival (by Austrian law within the first 3 days of your stay) you need to register at a municipal district office in Vienna. Check if online pre-booking for an appointment is needed. You will get further information on locations and links by BOKU before your arrival.

Visa and residence permit

- EU/EEA/Swiss citizens who stay in Austria for longer than 3 months:

For EU/EEA/Swiss citizens a visa-free entry in Austria is possible. After you have received the admission letter from BOKU and you have done your registration in Vienna you need to apply for the so called “Anmeldebescheinigung” (=confirmation of registration) at MA 35. Check if online pre-booking for an appointment is needed. Costs: approx. 15 EUR. Further details will be sent by BOKU-International Relations and can also be found [here](#).

- Non EU/EEA citizens:

Send a scan of your valid Belgian residence permit to your administrative coordinator at BOKU before the end of November.

Generally, you are allowed to stay with your valid Belgian student residence permit up to 90 days in Austria. According to EU directive 2016/801 BOKU will provide an official confirmation at the beginning of your studies in Vienna which confirms that you are taking part in an EMJMD mobility programme. With this confirmation, your valid passport, a proof of your travel health insurance and a valid Belgian student residence permit you can stay up to 360 days in Austria (as long as your Belgium residence permit is valid!). The maximum amount of 360 days can be split in shorter periods (e.g. for

two stays at BOKU). You can be asked to prove when you entered in Austria, left Austria and re-entered in Austria since legal authorities are calculating precisely on a daily basis. Therefore, keep all your cross-border flight/bus/train tickets during your whole study period. Further details will be sent by BOKU-International Relations and can be found [here](#).

In case instructions about visa and residence permits change, you will be informed in time.

5. Student right of complaint and appeal

Students have the right of complaint and appeal. These are described in an exam code specific to each Partner university for the courses taken at that university.

- UGent: <https://www.ugent.be/student/en/class-exam-exchange-intern/class-exam/education-examination-code/oeren20222023.pdf>
- UGOE: <https://www.uni-goettingen.de/en/49739.html>
- BOKU: <http://www.boku.ac.at/en/studienservices/themen/informationen-zu-pruefungen/>
- AU: <https://studerende.au.dk/en/studies/subject-portals/agroecology-food-and-environment/examination/examination-complaints/>

Additionally, the student can appeal on programme scores at the Examination Committee of IMSOGLO and for other matters of complaint can contact the ombudsperson at each university, or the IMSOGLO Coordinator via imsoglo@ugent.be.

6. Data protection

Data on the students are collected during the process of application, enrolment and examination. The partners have signed an agreement on the joint control of data processing. One aspect is, that you, as the “data subject”, can contact any of the controllers with regard to protecting their rights, other queries and communication regarding the agreement. The contact points are as follows:

- For UGent: privacy@ugent.be
- For BOKU: datenschutz@boku.ac.at
- For AU: dpo@au.dk
- For UGOE: datenschutz@uni-goettingen.de

7. People and contact

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