



STUDENT HANDBOOK

2024-2026

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1. About IMSOGLO

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

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

Additionally, there are eleven associated partners:

- Can Tho University - Vietnam
- Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology Kumasi - Ghana
- Maseno University - Kenya
- Universidade Federal de Pelotas - Brasil
- Universitas Pajajaran - Indonesia
- Washington State University - USA
- Universidade de Sao Paulo - Brasil
- International Livestock Research Institute ILRI - Kenya
- Österreichische Bundesforste AG - Austria
- Flanders Research Institute for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food ILVO - Belgium
- Joint Research Centre European Commission JRC – Italy

The associated partners and their representatives contribute to the implementation of the IMSOGLO programme and its project activities by developing one or more of the following actions:

- actively promoting the IMSOGLO programme in its institution and network;
- identifying and providing internship positions at its institution for IMSOGLO students;
- identifying and providing master dissertation research opportunities at its institution for IMSOGLO students;
- identifying guest lecturers from its institution to visit the IMSOGLO partners and give guest lectures;
- developing joint research with IMSOGLO partners;
- contribute to the organization of the Living Lab Summer Schools.

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

- <https://studiekiezer.ugent.be/2024/international-master-of-science-in-soils-and-global-change-soil-ecosystem-services-and-global-change-en/programma>
- <https://studiekiezer.ugent.be/2024/international-master-of-science-in-soils-and-global-change-soil-plant-system-processes-and-global-change-en/programma>

From 3-13 September 2024, the preparatory TakeOff programme will be offered to all new international students at the Faculty of Bioscience Engineering of Ghent University. More info will be available on the Ufora info site TakeOff2024.

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

The 1st semester is organized at UGent and starts with a **Primer Event** in which soils, soil threats and climate-smart sustainable soil management are introduced 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 four partner universities which might help them to define their optional courses for the specialization in the 2nd and 3rd semester, and to interest them for a topic for the master dissertation which is typically conducted in the 4th semester. The Primer Event takes place from 16-18 September 2024. Thereafter, during the 1st semester, 30 ECTS of **Soil Fundamentals** courses are taught at UGent: Soil Biology, Soil Chemistry, Soil Physics, Soil Evolution under Global Change, Land Information Systems, and Applied Statistics.

The specialization “**Soil Ecosystem Services and Global Change**” leaves the students at UGent in the 2nd semester and brings them to AU in the 3rd semester:

- The courses at UGent in the 2nd semester focus on natural resources management for resilience to global change. The four mandatory courses (17 credits) focus on the impact of climate change on soil performance and explore how soil management and land use planning can prevent, remediate, or adapt to soil degradation. Three ECTS are reserved for a Living Lab Summer School, each year at a different location. Students choose 13 credits courses from a list of optional courses, including internship, soft skills courses and open choice.
- The courses at AU in the 3rd semester focus on the soil physical and soil-C consequences of global change. The three mandatory courses (18 credits) concentrate on global soil degradation and ecosystem services, and digital soil mapping. Students choose 10 credits courses from a list of optional courses, including soft skills courses and open choice.

The specialization “**Soil-Plant System Processes and 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 six mandatory courses (18 credits) 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. Three credits ECTS are reserved for a Living Lab Summer School, each year at a different location. Students choose 12 credits courses from a list of optional courses, including internship, soft skills courses and open choice.
- The courses at UGOE in the 3rd semester focus on the biogeochemical consequences of global change from an (agro-)ecological perspective. The three mandatory courses (18 credits) cover different scale levels: landscape dynamics, agricultural biochemistry and soil microbiology. Students choose 12 credits courses from a list of optional courses, including soft skills courses and open choice.

During the summer after the 2nd semester, all students come together again for the **Living Lab Summer School**, a one week off-campus course.

During the 4th semester, the students perform their **Master dissertation** research (30 credits) at one of the partner universities, associated partners, or at an external university/organisation/company. The main academic supervisor of the dissertation 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 (see also section 3.8).

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 overall management of IMSOGLO, including the evaluation of the application files of candidate students, selection of scholarship holders, financial management, course programme content, student support and quality assurance. The MB is chaired by the Coordinator, currently prof. dr. engineer Wim Cornelis. The MB meets at least three times per year. The composition of the MB reflects its main roles:

2.2. Programme Steering Group (PSG)

The PSG convenes at least three 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 of delivery and marks achieved by students. The PSG is thus important in the Quality Assurance (QA) of IMSOGLO. The PSG checks, by means of a competency matrix, whether all the IMSOGLO programme learning outcomes 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, see below). The PSG is the main actor in the Plan-Do-Check-Act components of the cycle for Quality Assurance, but independent checks are under responsibility of the EQAC;
- to advise on individual study programmes, selection of elective courses, master dissertation 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 convert student results to a common grading system according to advice from the Examination Committee (EC);
- to contribute to reports to EACEA at request of the Coordinator.

As student participation is important for IMSOGLO, student and alumni representatives are member of the PSG.

Composition: One lecturer nominated by each partner university, one student representative per master year, one alumnus. The group is chaired by the Coordinator and facilitated by Technical Secretariat (TS).

2.3. Technical Secretariat (TS)

The TS, hosted at the Coordinating Institution, will treat all administrative questions and problems and will be in charge of practical issues, such as arrival of students (including visa and residence permit applications), mobility arrangements, administrative tasks concerning study progress, collecting the grades of students, organisation of the selection procedure, organisation of meetings of the managing bodies, communication, financial reporting and report writing.

The Technical Secretariat is further responsible for the maintenance of the IMSOGLO website <https://imsoglo.eu/>. This Secretariat will work under the guidance of the Coordinator. At every partner university, there will be a Local Secretariat consisting of at least one dedicated contact person who will deal with practical issues there and will collaborate with the Technical Secretariat.

The financial coordination is done by the Technical Secretariat at UGent and in agreement with decisions made by the Management Board and agreed in this Consortium Agreement.

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 convenes at annual frequency and its roles are

- to check the entry level of candidates against the academic and English language admission requirements. The TS prepares a ranking of candidates, checks the entry level of all incoming students, and submits this to the SSG for evaluation.
- to rank all eligible candidates, select Erasmus Mundus scholarship holders and award partial programme participation cost waivers, following the criteria set by EACEA. Scholarship holders are equally distributed over the two specialisations of the IMSOGLO programme. Gender and geographical balance are also taken into consideration. The SSG submits the final proposal to the MB for approval.

Composition: One representative nominated by each partner university, chaired by the Coordinator and facilitated by the Technical Secretariat.

2.5. Education Quality Assurance Committee (EQAC)

The EQAC is established at Consortium level, with one member from each partner university. These members are well aware of the Education Quality Assurance (QA) in place at their university and will check if the QA is in agreement with the local institutional regulations. In particular, the EQAC monitors the quality of the education in the IMSOGLO 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.

2.6. Coordination University and Coordinator

Ghent University is the Coordinating Institution. It is responsible for the overall management of IMSOGLO and is in charge of coordinating the IMSOGLO programme. It will take all actions necessary for a good functioning of the Consortium and for the fulfilment of the contractual agreement with the EACEA. The Coordinator is the project leader in the Coordinating Institution. The Coordinator is currently prof. dr. engineer Wim Cornelis and acts as Chair of the Management Board. Among other things, the Coordinator is responsible for the good functioning of the Technical Secretariat, the administrative and practical functioning of the IMSOGLO programme, the timely organisation of meetings of the Management Board and all other things necessary for a smooth running and organisation of the IMSOGLO programme.

3. Academic matters

3.1. Programme structure

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

Joint Primer Event at Ghent University

Semester 1 (30 credits):
Soil fundamentals at
Ghent University

Semester 2 (30 credits):
Soil Ecosystem Services and Global
Change:
Advanced topics and soft skills at
Ghent University

Semester 2 (30 credits):
Soil-Plant System Processes and Global
Change:
Advanced topics and soft skills at
BOKU Vienna

Joint Living Lab Summer School

Semester 3 (30 credits):
Soil Ecosystem Services and Global
Change:
Advanced topics at
Aarhus University

Semester 3 (30 credits):
Soil-Plant System Processes and Global
Change:
Advanced topics at
University of Göttingen

Semester 4
(30 credits):
Soil Ecosystem
Services and
Global Change:
Joint thesis at
Ghent
University
cosupervised by
Aarhus
University

Semester 4
(30 credits):
Soil Ecosystem
Services and
Global Change:
Joint thesis at
Aarhus
University
cosupervised by
Ghent
University

Semester 4
(30 credits):
Soil-Plant
System
Processes and
Global Change:
Joint thesis at
BOKU Vienna
cosupervised by
University of
Göttingen

Semester 4
(30 credits):
Soil-Plant
System
Processes and
Global Change:
Joint thesis at
University of
Göttingen
cosupervised by
BOKU Vienna

Joint Graduation Ceremony at Ghent University

3.2. Academic calendar

Soil Ecosystem Services and Global Change 2024 – 2026

Year	Semester	Start date	End date	Mobility	
1	1	03/09/2024	13/09/2024	Arrival, TakeOff	
		16/09/2024	18/09/2024	Ghent University IMSOGL0 Primer Event	
		23/09/2024	20/12/2024	Ghent University Mandatory courses (30 ECTS)	
		23/12/2024	03/01/2025	Christmas holidays	
		06/01/2025	31/01/2025	Ghent University Exams	
		03/02/2025	07/02/2025	Inter-semester holidays	
	2		10/02/2025	04/04/2025	Ghent University Mandatory courses (17 ECTS) Elective courses (13 ECTS)
			07/04/2025	21/04/2025	Easter holidays
			22/04/2025	23/05/2025	Ghent University Continuation of: Mandatory courses (17 ECTS) Elective courses (13 ECTS)
			26/05/2025	04/07/2025	Ghent University Exams
		07/07/2025	15/08/2025	Summer holidays Living Lab Summer School: 7-13/07/2025 (to be confirmed)	
		18/08/2025	12/09/2025	Ghent University Resit exams	
2	3	25/08/2025	05/12/2025	Aarhus University Mandatory courses (20 ECTS) Elective courses (10 ECTS)	
		08/12/2025	12/12/2025	Preparation for exams	
		15/12/2025	23/01/2026	Aarhus University Exams	
		18/05/2026	05/06/2026	Aarhus University Resit exams	
	4	26/01/2026	15/09/2026 <i>Mind specific master dissertation submission deadlines!</i> <i>At Aarhus University, the submission deadline is 2-4 weeks before the assessment deadline on 30/06.</i>	Master dissertation (30 ECTS) Aarhus University or Ghent University	

Soil-Plant System Services and Global Change 2024 – 2026

Year	Semester	Start date	End date	Mobility	
1	1	03/09/2024	13/09/2024	Arrival, TakeOff	
		16/09/2024	18/09/2024	Ghent University IMSOGL0 Primer Event	
		23/09/2024	20/12/2024	Ghent University Mandatory courses (30 ECTS)	
		23/12/2024	03/01/2025	Christmas holidays	
		06/01/2025	31/01/2025	Ghent University Exams	
		03/02/2025	07/02/2025	Inter-semester holidays	
	2		24/02/2025	22/03/2025	BOKU Mandatory courses (18 ECTS) Elective courses (12 ECTS)
			24/03/2025	04/04/2025	Easter holidays
			07/04/2025	18/07/2025*	BOKU Continuation of: Mandatory courses (18 ECTS) Elective courses (12 ECTS) Exams (period to be confirmed) *officially the summer semester ends by 30 September at BOKU - courses are finished by 30 June usually
			07/07/2025	15/08/2025	Summer holidays Living Lab Summer School: 7-13/07/2025 (to be confirmed)
		18/08/2025	12/09/2025	Ghent University Resit exams	
		18/08/2025	18/10/2025	BOKU Resit exams - depending on teacher's availability, individual arrangements possible	
2	3	20/10/2025	19/12/2025	University Of Göttingen Mandatory courses (18 ECTS) Elective courses (12 ECTS)	
		22/12/2025	02/01/2026	Christmas holidays	
		05/01/2026	13/02/2026	University of Göttingen Continuation of: Mandatory courses (18 ECTS) Elective courses (12 ECTS)	
		16/02/2026	27/03/2026	University of Göttingen Exams	
	4	30/03/2026	15/09/2026 <i>Mind specific master dissertation submission deadlines!</i>	Master dissertation (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 students that are national of a European Economic Area* (EEA) country and 9,000 euro per year for students that are not national of a European Economic Area* (EEA) country. Erasmus Mundus Scholarship-holding students do not pay programme participation cost; non-Erasmus Mundus scholarship-holding students will receive an invoice to pay the programme participation cost before enrolment.

*European Economic Area (EEA): Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden

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. They can be found in the study guide on the UGent website, but also on the websites of the other Partner universities.

- <https://studiekiezer.ugent.be/2024/international-master-of-science-in-soils-and-global-change-soil-ecosystem-services-and-global-change-en/programma>
- <https://studiekiezer.ugent.be/2024/international-master-of-science-in-soils-and-global-change-soil-plant-system-processes-and-global-change-en/programma>

The student needs to follow the educational and examination code of the university the student is 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 1st semester is preceded by a Primer Event, from 16-18 September 2024. On Wednesday 18 September, a reception and vegetarian BBQ is organised in the evening (as of 16:30) to get to know each other and the some of the IMSOGLO staff.

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

- <https://studiekiezer.ugent.be/2024/international-master-of-science-in-soils-and-global-change-soil-ecosystem-services-and-global-change-en/programma>
- <https://studiekiezer.ugent.be/2024/international-master-of-science-in-soils-and-global-change-soil-plant-system-processes-and-global-change-en/programma>

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 one 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 October 1, 2024. Soil Ecosystem Services and Global Change students also need to select their elective courses for the 2nd semester at UGent by October 1, while Soil-Plant System Processes and Global Change students need to select their elective courses for the 2nd semester at BOKU by March 15. You will receive further instructions on how to select your elective courses by email from the Study Track Counsellor.

Soil Ecosystem Services students: your curriculum for the 2nd IMSOGLO year containing your elective courses needs to be registered and submitted in oasis.ugent.be by October 1, 2025.

Soil-Plant System Processes students: your curriculum for the 2nd IMSOGLO year containing your elective courses needs to be registered and submitted in oasis.ugent.be by November 15, 2025.

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. Ensure that the curriculum in OASIS aligns with the curriculum at the partner university. In case you have questions on your curriculum, contact imsoglo@ugent.be.

Remember that you have to re-enroll at Ghent University via oasis.ugent.be for your second year even if you do not take courses at Ghent University during your second year.

3.7. Internship

IMSOGL0 students of both specializations can include an internship as an elective course in their first year curriculum.

In case you follow the specialization Soil Ecosystem Services and Global Change, you can do a 5 credits internship as an elective course during the 2nd semester at UGent.

In case you follow the specialization Soil-Plant System Processes and Global Change, you can do a 3 credits internship as an elective course during the 2nd semester at BOKU.

The purpose of an internship is to allow students to get a practical training under real conditions, apply theoretical knowledge and expand their competences. It will also provide an opportunity to learn about career positions and different working environments, and carry out specialized work which might not be offered within the programme. An internship is therefore not aimed at academic research and should not be seen as a precursor to a master dissertation. It is preferably carried out in a company or organization with a strong link to business or socio-economic practice.

Internship for Soil Ecosystem Services students

The contact person of the internship for Soil Ecosystem Services students is **prof. Steven Sleutel** (steven.sleutel@ugent.be).

A list of potential internship places (non-exhaustive list) will be provided during the first semester but an internship place can also be proposed on the student's own initiative. In any case, the concrete subject must be submitted for approval to the **internship manager** (i.e. prof. Steven Sleutel) via an **internship application form**. The internship manager is the first point of contact but is not involved in the practical implementation of the internship. The follow-up is in the hands of an **academic supervisor**, in addition to the **supervisor at the internship workplace**. The academic supervisor is a staff member involved in IMSOGLO and can give advice on the scientific-technical content but will mainly supervise the reporting. The student is responsible for finding an academic supervisor, but can be assisted by the internship manager.

An **UGent internship contract** needs to be established, necessary to be insured during the internship. During an **info session** in November, the International Training Centre (ITC) will provide further instructions. All steps are explained on the [Faculty website for internships](#). Please, respect the mentioned **deadlines**.

Timing:

Please contact steven.sleutel@ugent.be as soon as possible during the first IMSOGLO semester in case you are interested in doing an internship. You will receive further instructions to prepare your internship.

For Soil Ecosystem Services students, the **5 ECTS credits** internship is included in the curriculum of the 2nd semester of the 1st master year and so the internship must be completed and defended before September of the 1st IMSOGLO year. The internship workplace should be selected during the first semester.

An internship is usually carried out during the summer vacation but may also be carried out at other times. In any case, an internship must take **at least 20 working days** and needs to be completed before the student travels to Aarhus in August.

Reporting and evaluation:

No later than 6 weeks after the end of the internship, a **report** is submitted according to the template provided. It presents the company/organization and the work plan, discusses the scientific and socio-economic context. An **oral presentation** is then given upon appointment at the end of August, beginning of September. The workplace supervisor and the academic supervisor are part of the jury, which is chaired by the internship manager. All jury members will have the opportunity to ask questions.

Internship for Soil-Plant System Processes students

The contact person of the internship for Soil-Plant System Processes students is **prof. Eugenio Diaz-Pines** (eugenio.diaz-pines@boku.ac.at).

A list of potential internships and topics will be provided during the first semester. The student may suggest additional institutions. The workplace where the internship will take place will be discussed with the **course coordinator**, who will authorize the internship. A **mentor** from the host institution will be assigned, who will be both contact person for the student and responsible for him/her during the whole duration of the stay.

Timing:

Please contact eugenio.diaz-pines@boku.ac.at as soon as possible during the first IMSOGLO semester in case you are interested in doing an internship. You will receive further instructions to prepare your internship.

For Soil-Plant System Processes students, the **3 ECTS credits** internship is included in the curriculum of the 2nd semester of the 1st master year and so the internship must be completed and defended before September of the 1st IMSOGLO year. The internship workplace should be selected during the first semester.

An internship is usually carried out during the summer vacation but may also be carried out at other times. In any case, an internship must take **at least 75 working hours or 2 weeks**.

Reporting and evaluation:

Continuous/permanent assessment of the student by the host mentor during the internship duration is done. The hosting mentor will fill in an evaluation questionnaire after the internship has finalized. A short **report** is delivered by the student, including a description of activities conducted, main results and lessons learned. The report will be evaluated by the course coordinator and the host mentor.

3.8. Master dissertation

The Master dissertation is scheduled for the 4th semester. It is closely aligned with the student's study program, specifically focusing on Soils and Global Change in its broad sense.

Information moments on the possible topics and location of the master dissertation research are organised:

- during the Primer Event before the start of the 1st semester, in which the involved universities will present the various research themes of potential supervisors, to interest students for their research;
- during the 2nd semester, via online or in person interactions with possible master dissertation supervisors, in which students can receive more info on topics they are particularly interested in.

Each Master dissertation is supervised by at least one supervisor from the Partner university organizing the student's chosen specialisation, and co-supervised by one co-supervisor from the other Partner university within the same specialisation. This means that students in the 'Soil Ecosystem Services and Global Change' specialization have at least one supervisor and co-supervisor from UGent and AU, and in the 'Soil-Plant System Processes and Global Change' specialization from BOKU and UGOE. An extra co-supervisor may be appointed from an Associated Partner, if the master dissertation work is conducted at or in collaboration with an Associated Partner. For example, a student working on his/her/their dissertation at UGOE, has at least one UGOE supervisor and one BOKU co-supervisor. Exceptionally, students may conduct their dissertation at a Partner university different from the one organizing their specialization.

A list of dissertation topics (shared Excel file) provided by IMSOGLO lecturers and a document (pdf file) including a short description of each topic, will be made available to the students in the second week of March of the first master. Students then have more than six weeks to select a first and second priority topic, one from each Partner university organizing their specialization. Students also have the option to propose their own topic. To avoid that multiple students select the same topic as their first or second choice, they are encouraged to communicate with each other. The shared Excel file allows students to track the selection of topics by their peers. They may revise their selection up until the deadline (end of April of first master). Even students proposing their own topics must still select a first and second priority. As mentioned above, they may, exceptionally, choose a topic from a Partner university different to the one organizing their specialization. Note that every topic presented on the list will remain accessible to IMSOGLO students and feasible to implement. This means that if a topic is also selected by students from another program, supervisors should find creative solutions. For example, the topic could be divided in two (or more) with different focuses, or students (from different programs) could collaborate on the same topic. In the latter case, each student must submit an individual manuscript with the collaboration acknowledged in the introduction, specifying the

similarities and distinct aspects of their work. This regulation applies only to students from different programs; IMSOGLO students cannot work on the same topic.

A committee is responsible for assigning the topics in May of the first master, and there is no first-come-first-serve regulation in place. If multiple IMSOGLO students select the same topic, they will be asked to provide a short written motivation or discuss their interest orally in a meeting with the supervisor. The supervisor will then decide which student will be assigned the topic. The committee aims to ensure an equal distribution of topics among the Partner universities. Once a topic is assigned to each student, co-supervisors (from the other Partner university organizing the specialization) will be assigned by the program coordinators. In June of the first master, students are informed about their final topic assignment as well as the assigned (co-)supervisors. The exact starting date for their master dissertation research must be coordinated and agreed upon with their supervisors.

Students are required to submit their master dissertation to the Partner university of their main supervisor, where it is evaluated and defended according to the local regulations. A joint IMSOGLO assessment form is used. Both manuscript and defense are initially scored on a scale from 0 to 10, after which the score is converted to the UGent scoring system (the score that will appear on the transcript of records) and then to the local scoring system using the IMSOGLO conversion table as per the Consortium Agreement. The scores are based on the (qualitative) assessment of several criteria grouped in rubrics that evaluate the learning outcomes.

For each master dissertation of 30 ECTS credits, 20 ECTS credits are obtained at the partner delivering the supervisor, and 10 ECTS credits are obtained at the partner delivering the co-supervisor.

Students follow the local procedures and regulations for the master dissertation work, writing, submission, defence and evaluation.

3.9. 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.

The lecturers of courses followed at the partners are responsible to convert the grades to the UGent grading system. For cases where the grade conversion from Aarhus University, BOKU University, or the University of Göttingen to the Ghent University grading system (0-20 scale) results in multiple possible outcomes based on the conversion table, the responsible lecturer will determine the final grade on the UGent scale. If the lecturer does not explicitly assign a specific grade, the lowest value on the 0-20 scale, as indicated by the conversion table, will be applied.

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. Dealing with the educational culture shock

During previous student intakes of the IMSOGLO program, we observed that the diverse backgrounds of students made it challenging for some to adjust during the first semester. Your experiences and expectations regarding teaching and learning styles, interaction with lecturers, and workload may vary depending on your background—familiar to some, but a culture shock for others. Therefore, it is important to understand the expected initial competencies at the start of the courses and to be aware of your responsibilities. Below we briefly address these issues.

4.1. Teaching and learning styles and interaction with lecturers

In Europe, teaching styles vary by lecturer and also by teaching form. Some teaching forms are much more interactive than others. Generally, lecturers and their assistants are open to questions during class hours and are willing to help afterwards as well, within the limits of their availability. The distance between lecturers and students may be surprisingly modest for some of you. The motto is: **Dare to ask!**

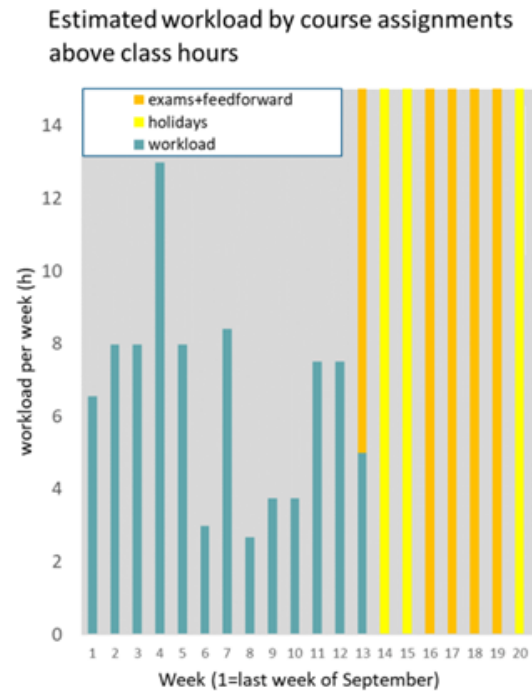
A lot of communication flows via the e-learning platforms, which is Ufora at UGent. **Stay tuned** to the IMSOGLO infosite on Ufora and the individual course sites. Read your Ghent University e-mails daily in order to not miss any important info.

Learning styles vary by student, but as courses are taught in parallel (several courses scheduled in each week), it is advisable to follow up continuously and not wait for the exam period to catch up.

4.2. Work load

The work load of each course, expressed in hours, is more than the sum of the contact (class) hours per week, but also includes assignments, preparing for classes, studying, etc. While class hours are the same for all students, hours spent on assignments and studying vary per student. The figure on the right shows how many hours students spent on average on assignments per week during the first semester at Ghent University in academic year 2020-2021, based on a survey amongst lecturers.

This graph can help you to **plan your work**. An updated version will be made available in October.



4.3. Initial competences

Course files always indicate what expertise, competences or skills you need to successfully start a course. Normally, all admitted students to IMSOGLO should be able to follow all courses. However, as students have varying academic backgrounds and may have obtained their Bachelor degree some years ago, a check on initial competences is worthwhile before you select elective courses.

The course files containing the initial competences can be found by clicking on individual courses on:

- <https://studiekiezer.ugent.be/2024/international-master-of-science-in-soils-and-global-change-soil-ecosystem-services-and-global-change-en/programma>
- <https://studiekiezer.ugent.be/2024/international-master-of-science-in-soils-and-global-change-soil-plant-system-processes-and-global-change-en/programma>

5. Mobility and partner info

5.1. Passport, visa and residence permit

If you need a visa to live and study in Europe, make sure you have a valid **international passport** (note that it must be valid until at least six months after your return, i.e. at least until March 20xx+3 if you start the IMSOGLO programme in September 20xx).

If you need a visa to live and study in Europe, please start your **visa application** as soon as possible after you have received your Letter of Admission.

Apply for a **long stay student visa type D** at the [Belgian embassy or consulate which is competent for your country of residence](#). More information about your visa application can be found [here](#) and at the competent Belgian embassy or consulate.

IMSOGLO includes student mobility to other Schengen countries, and therefore you have to apply for a long stay student visa type D with **code B35**. After your arrival in Belgium, you will be able to apply based on this

code B35 for a two year residence permit that will allow you to travel to Austria and Germany without having to apply for a visa in these countries.

When applying for a visa, you will be asked to prove your [solvency](#) (i.e. sufficient means of subsistence). This solvency can be proved in different ways:

- A Scholarship Award Letter (document certifying that the student has been granted a scholarship);
- An affidavit of support (or a financial guarantee);
- A blocked account and solvency letter: UGent can provide a letter to prove sufficient means of subsistence. In that case the financial means have to be transferred to a bank account of UGent, where they will be blocked on a personal account. The financial means will then be reimbursed to you on a monthly basis. For more information, contact international@ugent.be.

For registration at the City of Ghent (i.e. application for a residence permit), students must register within eight working days after arrival via this [link](#).

5.2. BOKU University

Registration at BOKU

Find **general info** about welcome days, studying at BOKU and living in Vienna for international students [here](#). [Online pre-registration at BOKU](#) before 5 February is required. The pre-registration is 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 rent a room in the student residences or share a flat. It is important to check your IMSOGLO calendar before booking a room. Book 2-3 months beforehand since the rooms are on a first come first serve basis. Housing is 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 three 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 three 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.

5.3. 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 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. Find more info [here](#). 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

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

5.4. 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

EU/EEA/Swiss citizens

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. Find more information [here](#).

Non-EU/EEA citizens

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.

We strongly recommend that you apply for a residence permit for the duration of your 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 early May.

It is important that you apply as soon as possible as after you receive the mail with a link to the online application form. **It may take up to three months for the authorities to process your application!**

Please be aware that the Danish Immigration Authorities will charge a fees of about 500 euro in total.

Step by Step Guide

- 1) Fill in an online ST1 form and pay the first fee.
 - a. You will receive an email from AU with a link to the form as AU must initiate this process on your behalf.
 - b. The mail will include an instruction about how to fill in the form and a formal enrolment letter from AU.
 - c. It will be possible to apply from 15 May – not earlier.
 - d. **Important: You are required to give your biometrics within 14 days after paying the first fee! So, get the appointment at the embassy first and THEN pay the fee.**

- 2) Give your biometrics and pay the second fee.
 - a. Get an appointment at the Danish embassy in Brussels to give you biometrics (Phone number: 022330919)
 - b. **Important: You are required to give your biometrics within 14 days after paying the first fee! So, get the appointment at the embassy first and THEN pay the fee.**

- 3) You will receive the residence permit/visa
 - a. Entry in Denmark is possible before you receive the residence permit **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.

Find more information [here](#) and [here](#).

6. Student right of complaint and appeal

Students have the right of complaint and appeal to the IMSOGLO Management Board. 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/nl/studeren/regelgeving/oer20242025.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/>

Please send complaints and appeals to the IMSOGLO Management Board via imsoglo@ugent.be.

7. 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

8. People and contact

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Don't hesitate to become a member of the [Erasmus Mundus Association \(EMA\)](#), an association for students and alumni of Erasmus Mundus Master and Doctoral programmes.



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