



## **VISA APPLICATION GUIDELINES: BELGIUM**

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### **Contents**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| INTRODUCTION .....                             | 1 |
| I. VISA APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS .....         | 2 |
| Required Documentation for ISEP Students ..... | 2 |
| II. AFTER ARRIVING IN BELGIUM .....            | 4 |
| A Note Regarding the Schengen Area.....        | 4 |

### **INTRODUCTION**

**Students studying in Belgium for more than 90 days must obtain a long-stay student visa prior to departure. Visa fees and any visa-related travel costs are the responsibility of the student.** If you have questions regarding the status of your student visa application, you must contact your local Belgian Embassy or Consulate General. ISEP cannot contact consulates on behalf of students.

*European citizens and students studying in Belgium for less than 90 days (summer programs) do NOT need to obtain a visa before arrival.*

If you have yet to obtain a current passport, please do so immediately. Your host institution may request a copy of your passport by a certain deadline (for visa or admission purposes), and failure to meet this deadline could have serious consequences. Applicants for the Belgian student visa will need a passport valid for **15 months** beyond the end of their program.

**The student visa requirements for Belgium are extensive, and students should begin collecting the required documentation and preparing their applications as soon as they have accepted their program placement. Please check the requirements of the specific [Embassy or Consulate General for your jurisdiction](#) prior to starting your application!**

**All ISEP students studying in Belgium for more than 90 days should apply for a Type D Long-Stay Student visa.** Your main purpose of stay is as a student wishing to pursue higher education in an educational establishment organized, recognized or subsidized by the public authorities (**Article 58**)

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** *The following procedures and requirements are specific to for United States citizens applying for a Belgian student visa. If you are not applying for the visa from the United States, please check with the [Belgian Embassy or Consulate](#) in your home country regarding their specific requirements. If you will need any documents certified with the Apostille of the Hague, please consult this [list](#) of designated competent authorities.*

# I. VISA APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS (U.S. Applicants)

As of December 1, 2018, all U.S. visa applicants for long-term higher education student visas are required to apply for their visa in person at the [Embassy or Consulate General for the jurisdiction where they reside](#), at which time their biometrics will be taken.

Visa applicants should [book an appointment online](#) in advance at the Consulate General or Embassy for their jurisdiction. ***Students should schedule their appointment as soon as possible, as visa appointments can fill up several months in advance.*** Be sure to schedule an appointment for a date between 90 and 30 days before your departure for Belgium. Students should also schedule an appointment for a date by which they expect to have assembled all required documentation for the visa application (see below).

General application instructions for the Belgian long-stay visa for higher education students can be found at this [link](#). The list of required documents below has been developed as a guide for ISEP students, but *application requirements are subject to change without notice*. Students should consult the general application instructions prior to their visa appointment to be sure they are complying with the most up-to-date regulations.

## Required Documentation for ISEP Students:

***IMPORTANT NOTE:*** *The Belgian consulates require one set of original documents and two sets of copies for every long-stay visa-application. Make sure you have included TWO copies for every original document (except for the application form) in your file. You should also keep a third copy of every document for your personal records.*

1. **Passport** valid for 15 months beyond the end of your program

2. **ONLY for students 21 years of age or older at any point during their time in Belgium:** A **nationwide criminal history record check** (for U.S. citizens, a [FBI Identity History Summary Check](#)) dated within six months of your date of application for the visa. *If you will be under 21 for the full length of your time abroad, you do not need to complete this step.*

For information on how to request an FBI Background Check please consult this [link](#). For a faster processing time ISEP *highly* recommends that students submit their request via [Electronic Departmental Order](#) to expedite this process. No authentication (apostille) is required. ONLY FBI BACKGROUND CHECKS PRINTED ON TAMPER PROOF PAPER OR IN THEIR ORIGINAL SEALED ENVELOPES ARE ACCEPTED.

3. A **signed hard copy of the application form that you completed on Visa On Web (VOW) after registering on the website [visaonweb.diplomatie.be](#)** + 1 copy

### ***Application form notes:***

- Your main purpose of journey is “**Studies Art. 58**”
  - This means you are a student studying under Article 58 of Belgium’s visa regulations, i.e. other words a student wishing to pursue higher education in an educational establishment organized, recognized or subsidized by the public authorities.
- Students should request a "multiple-entry" visa.
- The “inviting person” is your host university ISEP coordinator. Their name and contact information can be found in your ISEP Dashboard.
- E-signatures are not permitted. You must sign the printed hard copy of the application form with a blue or black pen.

4. **Language form** (in [French](#), [Dutch](#) or [German](#)); Choose one of the forms and indicate your language preference (or no preference). The option you choose will be used by the Belgian Home Office to communicate its decision regarding your visa application. *There is no English version of this document.* Please retain a copy for your records.

A. Indicate your name: full name as it appears on your passport (nom du demandeur, naam visumaanvrager, Name Visumbewerber)

B. Number of the file (numéro du dossier - dossiernummer - Aktenzeichen) will be indicated by the consulate, so there is no need to fill out this section.

C. Indicate in what language you wish your file to be handled:

i. no preference (geen voorkeur, pas de preference, keiner Sprache den Vorzug)

ii. prefer French (français, Frans, französischer Sprache)

iii. prefer Dutch (néerlandais, Nederlands, niederländischer Sprache)

iv. prefer German (allemand, Duits, deutscher Sprache)

D. Date the form

NOTE: be sure to format DAY MONTH YEAR (NOT: MONTH, DAY, YEAR)

E. Sign the form (no need to notarize it)

5. **Two recent passport-sized pictures**, each signed on the back.

6. **A medical certificate** and **two** copies. The medical document can be issued a maximum of 3 months before the date of your application.

You may choose from a [list of physicians](#) affiliated with the Embassy or the Consulate General, or have your family physician complete the medical certificate.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** *If you choose your family physician, the doctor's signature needs to be notarized by a notary public and authenticated by apostille which in the U.S. is to be obtained from the [Secretary of State](#) for the state where the notary public has their office.*

7. The official **Letter of Acceptance** from your host university in Belgium, certifying that the applicant is accepted and/or registered as a regular, full-time student.

8. Two official copies of your **latest academic transcripts**.

9. A **financial support declaration** guaranteeing payment of living, educational, medical and repatriation expenses.

The Letter of Certification from ISEP, the full ISEP Contract of Participation, and Confirmation of Insurance Coverage letter for the ISEP Student Insurance (all three documents found in students' ISEP Dashboard) and the policy brochure for the ISEP Student Insurance at this [link](#) should suffice for this requirement. Depending on the consulate, an additional [affidavit of financial support](#) may also be required.

**All students should verify the proof of financial support requirements with their particular consulate prior to their visa appointment.**

If you must submit the affidavit of financial support, please follow the guidelines at the link above.

- The financial support declaration needs to be completed in Dutch, as this is the official language of the university you will be attending.

- The financial support declaration can also be signed by the sponsor in front of the visa officer, thus avoiding the presentation of a notarized copy of the sponsor's driver's license or passport. The signature legalization fee is \$24 USD as of February 1, 2019 (subject to change).

10. Pay the **contribution fee** via wire transfer.

As of September 15, 2019, the fee for ISEP students is **€204**, as they are "enrolled in an educational establishment organized, accredited or subsidized by the Government."

For payment instructions scroll to the bottom of the page at this [link](#). You must provide a **valid proof of payment** for the correct amount of the contribution. For example: If you have made a bank transfer, you should include the account statement or a deposit slip with a postmark.

11. **Fee to be paid at the time of application:** The visa application fee is non-refundable and is **\$216 USD** as of September 15, 2019

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** *This cost can change often due to fluctuating exchange rates - please see the [visa application instructions](#) page to verify the current application fee amount.*

Certified checks and money orders only (no personal checks), paid to the order of:

"the Embassy of Belgium in Washington" if you apply at the Embassy in Washington

"the Consulate General of Belgium" if you apply at the Consulate General in Atlanta, Los Angeles or New York.

Incorrect money orders or certified checks will be rejected and returned to the applicant. Processing will only begin once the proper payment is received.

Only at the Embassy in Washington and the Consulate General of Los Angeles may you also pay with Visa or MasterCard.

11. **A self-addressed prepaid envelope** for the Consulate to return your passport and visa.

Do not use metered postage – certified mail or shipping service (Certified USPS, UPS, FedEx, etc.) only. The Embassy or Consulate General is not responsible for lost items during shipping.

## II. AFTER ARRIVING IN BELGIUM

Make sure that all passports and visas are endorsed (stamped) by the immigration authorities when first entering Belgium (at airport or other border post).

It is important that you register yourself with the City Hall of your place of residence in Belgium within 8 days of your arrival. Details regarding the registration process will be provided during the on-site orientation at your host university.

The local authorities will process a registration identity document that allows you to enter and leave the country as a legal temporary resident of Belgium.

### **A Note Regarding the Schengen Area:**

Belgium is a member of the Schengen area. Students should review the [important regulations](#) that dictate travel and visas within the Schengen area.

Current Schengen signature countries: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland.

Bulgaria, Cyprus, Ireland, Romania and, most notably, the United Kingdom are NOT part of the Schengen zone.