



Housing in Brussels

Welcome to Brussels. You are about to start the adventurous journey of studying and living in the heart of Europe. In order to make your stay and your study period an enjoyable time it is important to look for suitable accommodation. Your temporary new home should be a comfortable and study friendly environment. But how to get started? This brochure will guide you through your search for accommodation and will show you what Belgium's biggest student city has to offer. You can contact the Social Services HUB with all your practical questions and you will be given the necessary guidance and advice.





Studying in Brussels: excellent choice

Largest student city in Belgium

Brussels is a very lively city with many different districts and communes: it can be considered a melting pot of many different cultures. It is not only the capital of Belgium and Europe but it is also one of the largest student cities in Belgium.

Exciting experience

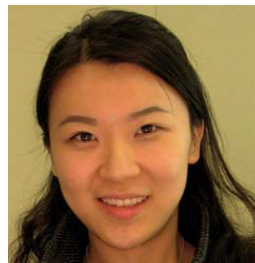
Living and studying in Brussels is in many ways an exciting experience. You get to know new people with different backgrounds, you make new friends, you become more independent and you find study companions to share your experiences with. On top of that you get to know other cultures and you live in a multicultural city with a wide variety of entertainment.

Brussels by night

As an ambitious student you want more than to just be buried in your books. Do you like cultural events, going to the cinema or to a concert? Do you enjoy a good discussion in a relaxed atmosphere? Then Brussels is the place to be. Apart from the museums, libraries and all kinds of cultural houses, Brussels offers you many bars, restaurants, clubs and cinemas. You can either go to one of the typical student bars, but you can also choose one of the more exclusive hot spots and forget about your studies for one night.

Vicky found out she has Chinese neighbours

Vicky is studying English and Economics for Academic Studies. She wants to continue with business and is interested in a future job in marketing. In her spare time she helps preparing a show for a Chinese radio station. "Brussels is an interesting subject to broadcast about. There is always something going on: exhibitions, fairs, festivals, museums. Having an own room in Brussels gives you more freedom to do all these things. It was interesting to find out I have Chinese neighbours."



Types of accommodation

It is important to know that there are different types of accommodation for students in Brussels and that these may differ from those in your home country. Most common in Belgium are the student rooms (the “koten”), but if you prefer some more privacy you can also opt for a studio. It is not at all customary in Belgium to rent apartments with other students and therefore they are very difficult to find.

Student rooms

Student rooms are single rooms in private student houses shared with 5-10 other students. Generally the rooms are furnished and are about 12 to 15 m² in size. Bed linen, towels and kitchen utensils are not provided. Every room has a private sink, but kitchen, showers and toilets have to be shared. Rent varies between 350

and 400 EUR per month, depending on the size, comfort and location of the room.

Studios

Studio’s are one-room flats with a private kitchenette and bathroom. The average size is 15 to 20 m². Rental prices range from 400 EUR for a single studio to 700 EUR for a double studio.

Apartments

The rent for an apartment ranges from 700 to 1000 EUR per month, depending on the size, location and furnishing.

Barna rents a house with school mates

Barna, a Hungarian student doing a Master of Business Administration, is renting a house right outside Brussels, together with his fellow students. All his house mates come from Central Europe and this atmosphere makes him feel more at home. If there are many house parties? “Of course, but now the time begins when people need to write their Master thesis.”



Where to find a room

The Social Services HUB is more than happy to help you look for a suitable place to live during your stay in Brussels. There are different possibilities and locations. Bear in mind that the situation in Brussels may differ from the housing situation and pricing at home and that not all of your wishes may be fulfilled. This is what you need to know:

HUB student rooms

If you intend to study in Brussels for one semester, you have the possibility to register for one of the rooms HUB reserves at the international student house 'Van Orley' of Br(ik. If you want more information about these rooms or if you want to register for one of the rooms, you can send an e-mail to housing@hubrussel.be before 15 June (students coming for the first semester) or 15 November (students coming for the second semester). Mention your contact details (name, address, telephone number, e-mail) as well as the period of your stay in Brussels and the expected arrival date. Please note that the HUB rooms are rented for a minimum period of 5 months.

Br(ik – Alles voor stadstudenten

If you plan to study in Brussels for the entire academic year, you are referred to Br(ik. This stands for Brussels and I. They organise a number of events for the Brussels' students and also manage student housing.

Housing service of Br(ik

The housing service of Br(ik is located in the Bloemenstraat 32, 1000 Brussels on walking distance from the HUB. Br(ik manages about 400 student rooms and studios all located in the city centre.

You can pass by their office for more information about the available rooms at any time.

Using the Br(ik online database

Br(ik also coordinates an online database. This database contains the 400 rooms Br(ik manages itself as well as student rooms, studios and apartments of private landlords spread over the city centre and the surrounding communes. On their website www.brik.be you can choose from 4000 rooms. Go to 'International students' and click on 'Find a room'. You can register for free in the online database by filling in the required contact details and information. Afterwards, you will receive a login. Once you have entered your search criteria, just click 'show rooms' at the bottom of the page and you will receive a list of rooms that match with your requirements. Now it is up to you to decide which rooms you would like to visit.

Quality label

Some rooms have a QL quality label. This means that they comply with the criteria of Br(ik concerning safety, hygiene, comfort and price. You found a room without quality label? Possible! The organization has not yet checked all the rooms in their database, so go have a look yourself.

Private housing

If there is nothing according to your needs in the Br(ik database, you can also rent a room through a private housing agency. However, HUB does not recommend this to students since the contracts are generally long-term and in most cases you will have to look for a replacement tenant yourself or pay a penalty fee.

Final step: sign a rental agreement

If you have decided which room you will take, you will have to sign a rental agreement. It is possible to use the model contract of Br(ik, but always read everything carefully. Ending a contract early is always very difficult. Note that changes or deletions in a contract are never advantageous and should be signed by both parties. Oral promises that are not mentioned on the contract cannot be enforced later on. Make sure everything is in writing to avoid discussions. On www.brik.be you will find more detailed information on contracts, deposits, rental price and commune taxes. Click on 'International Students' for more information in English.

Additional tips to take into account

You have to spend quite some time in your room and therefore it must be a pleasant environment where you feel comfortable. In order to avoid unpleasant surprises in the end, take into account following practical tips and tricks.

- **Compare several rooms.** Visit a number of student houses of different landlords before making the final decision. In this way you will get an idea of price versus quality of the student rooms on the market.

- **Decide on your priorities:** know what you want. Decide beforehand what the minimum standards of your student room should be. What comfort do you want? What price are you willing to pay?

Do you want a student room or a studio? Please note that the accommodation might be different from what you are used to, but in the end everybody finds a good place to stay.

- **Explore the neighbourhood,** also at night. Take the location of your room into account. A quiet area, supermarket or other shops nearby, near the campus or public transport are elements you can take into consideration.

- **Brussels is a very lively city,** especially in some areas at night. Renting a room near a bar or club can be the cause that you have a lot of trouble with noise. A good sound insulation is therefore essential in the student house and in your room.

- **Pay attention to the safety of the student house and the room.**

Is there an emergency exit, are there fire extinguishers, can the doors of the rooms be locked properly, are the heaters safe, ...? Also a minimum of comfort and hygiene are important to check.

- **Get to know your co-occupants.** Make sure you live in a student house where everybody respects each other, where the necessary student atmosphere is present and where studying is not forgotten.

- **Check what is or is not included** in the rental price in order to avoid surprises at the end of the month.

- **Read the rental agreement** very thoroughly before signing it! If you have doubts, ask the Social Services HUB for advice.

Contact

For assistance, practical information and questions related to housing, do not hesitate to send an e-mail to the address mentioned below.

Social Services HUB
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