ECTS Guide

Part 1: Information on Varna University of Management

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VARNA
UNIVERSITY OF
MANAGEMENT

1. Name and address

Varna University of Management (VUM; in Bulgarian Visshe Uchilishte po Menidzhmant, Varna)

VUM Campus Varna
13A, Oborishte str. 9000
Varna, Bulgaria

VUM Campus Dobrich
3, Bulgaria str. 9300
Dobrich, Bulgaria

2. Academic calendar

Academic calendar for 2020/2021
1st Semester: 28th September 2020 – 29th January 2021
2nd Semester: 1st February 2021 – 29th May 2021
Christmas holidays: 23rd December 2020 – 1st January 2021

3. Public holidays

1st January 2021: New Year's Day
3rd March 2021: Liberation Day
30th April 2021: Good Friday
1st May 2021: Labour Day
2nd May 2021: Easter
6th May 2021: St. George's Day, Day of the Bulgarian Army
24th May 2021: Bulgarian Education and Culture and Slavonic Literature Day
6th September 2021: Unification Day
22nd September 2021: Independence Day
24th December 2021: Christmas Eve
25th, 26th December 2021: Christmas Days

4. Academic authorities

Rector
Assoc. Prof. Todor Radev, PhD
Email: todor.radev@vumk.eu

Vice-Rector for Finance
Klara Dimitrova
Email: klara.dimitrova@vumk.eu

Vice-Rector for Education and Quality Assurance
Prof. Vesselin Blagoev, PhD Email: blagoev@iuc.bg

Vice Rector for Research
Prof. Stanislav Ivanov
Email: stanislav.ivanov@vumk.eu

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Director of International Cooperation Department
Christina Armutlieva
Email: christina.armutlieva@vumk.eu

Academic Director
Vanina Valcheva
Email: vanina.valcheva@vumk.eu

Head of Students Admissions
Nadezhda Malenkina
Email: nadezhda.malenkina@vumk.eu

Student Council President
Simeon Petrov
Email: student.council@vumk.eu

5. **General information on the institution**

Varna University of Management (VUM; in Bulgarian: Visshe Uchilishte po Menidzhmant) is a private not-for-profit higher education institution. The university was established in 1996 and is based in Varna, Bulgaria. VUM is deeply committed to the principles of internationalization and high quality of education. It offers undergraduate and master programmes in the fields of Business, Management, Hospitality, Tourism, Business Information Systems and Software Systems and Technologies. All VUM study programmes are delivered exclusively in English and lead to the award of two degrees, namely one from VUM and a second one from a strategic partner university of VUM located in the EU. Thanks to its internationally recognized programmes, VUM has one of the highest international students' rates in Bulgaria. In 2019/2020, full-time and exchange students from nearly 50 countries across the globe are studying at VUM, and more than 30% of all VUM students are international.

VUM has an extensive and sophisticated network of active academic partners of more than 200 universities on five continents. Every year, VUM welcomes over 150 exchange students from more than 30 countries, including India and various other Asian countries. Exchange students may visit and study at VUM for different periods of time depending on their study interests and agenda at home.

The long-term efforts and work of VUM academic community have been internationally recognized and validated. In 2019, for third year in a row VUM was ranked first worldwide by U-Multirank in terms of student mobility and international orientation. In 2019, VUM MBA programme was ranked 5th in Central and Eastern Europe by Eduniversal Best Masters ranking system. The latter ranks also VUM master programme in International Hospitality and Tourism Management 15th worldwide.

Over the last six years, VUM has participated in numerous academic and research projects funded by the European Commission through such grant programmes as Horizon 2020, Tempus IV and Erasmus+. VUM is currently the project coordinator and participant in six ongoing Erasmus+ projects, including the BEEHIVE and FRIENDS projects. The latter two projects are coordinated by VUM and funded under the Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education programme, and combine the efforts of VUM and 15 Asian universities from Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Cambodia and Bhutan.

Finally yet importantly, according to SSRN, in terms of research and number of publications VUM faculty and students have earned the university 278th place among the business schools worldwide. VUM faculty is engaged in various international science and research projects. VUM Research Institute issues internationally recognized science journals such as European Journal of Tourism Research (EJTR) and VUM Management Review. According to Scopus, EJTR is among the highest ranked European journals in the field of tourism research. As of 2016, EJTR is also indexed in Scopus and Web of Science.

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6. **List of programmes offered**

Professional Bachelor in International Business Management
Professional Bachelor in Hotel Management
Professional Bachelor in Software Systems and Technologies
Master of Business Administration
MSc International Hospitality and Tourism Management

7. **General admission requirements**

VUM adheres to a policy of non-discrimination in admitting students without regard to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, gender, disability or nationality. VUM students come as a rule from various parts of the world, blending a diverse range of academic backgrounds, life experience, special interests, talents and cultural heritage. Admission to VUM is granted depending on each student's individual qualifications and educational goals.

The general admission requirement for entry to the undergraduate programmes at VUM is a High School Diploma/ High School Leaving Certificate or equivalent qualification with a Grade Point Average of above 62% in at least two of the following subjects: Mathematics, Informatics, Economics, History, Geography, Literature, and English. 'A' levels are considered to be a form of equivalent qualification. The amount of the required courses passed varies depending on the nature of the 'A' levels obtained and the programme for which the student applies.

On the Master level, the prospective student needs to have successfully obtained secondary education from an officially recognized secondary school (High School Diploma with average mark of 62% from the general subjects) along with successful completion of a Bachelor degree programme with minimum 180 ECTS obtained. Relevant management experience and professional or another additional qualification are considered a competitive advantage during the selection procedure applicable for VUM Master programmes.

In addition to a strong academic record, VUM Admissions Office takes into account the student's extracurricular involvement, personal motivation, leadership skills, and other relevant background information.

English is the main language of communication at VUM. Students applying for any of the academic programmes should provide proof of language proficiency in English such as results from an internationally recognized English language test (SAT, TOEFL, IELTS, PTE, FCE etc.) or should take the English Placement Test at VUM. In any case, VUM expects all full-time students to have very good command of English language both written and spoken. In terms of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), this level of language proficiency equals at least level B2. Exchange students are expected to demonstrate language proficiency in English corresponding to at least level B1 according to the CEFR. Prospective full-time domestic and international students apply for admission at VUM through the Admissions Office (Email: admissions@vum.bg). VUM Admissions Office assists foreign students throughout the whole admission process, including visa application and arrival to Bulgaria. Foreign exchange and Erasmus+ students are welcome to apply online through VUM International Mobility Office (email: erasmus@vumk.eu).

For any type of information concerning academic offer, admission requirements, application procedures, recognition of prior learning, academic calendar etc. please contact VUM Admissions Office (email: admissions@vum.bg).

8. **General arrangements for recognition of prior learning**

Recognition of formal prior learning

At VUM, the procedure for recognition of prior learning for knowledge and competences acquired within formal education systems is described in the Rules and Regulations for Implementing of ECTS. The main principle taken

into account are the learning outcomes achieved by the student during his/her previous studies or credit mobility. The general philosophy is that student's knowledge is taken into account and recognized as long as it is relevant to the predefined learning outcomes and is properly documented (Transcript of Records). At VUM, recognition of ECTS credits gained at another academic institution is implemented by a Committee chaired by the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs and/or VUM Academic Director. The decision of the Committee on the ECTS recognition is validated through a protocol. The ECTS recognized from the formal prior learning are later included in the student Diploma and/or Diploma Supplement.

Recognition of non-formal and informal prior learning

It is possible to earn credits from work experience, business or industrial training programmes and other achievements. The general recognition procedure consists of the following steps:
1. Provision of initial support and consultation in the process of preparing a portfolio (a set of documents providing evidence of previous work experience)
2. Analysis of the portfolio and the knowledge, skills and competences gained based on the evidence provided
3. Identification of the learning outcomes via interviews, one-to-one sessions, discussions, role games etc.
4. Assessment of the learning outcomes demonstrated by the student and based on the available evidence
5. Decision about credit award in case of positive results.

For further enquiries about credit transfer and recognition of prior learning and training at VUM, please contact the Academic Affairs Department (email: academic@vumk.eu).

9. General registration procedures

Registration and enrollment of newly admitted students at VUM is processed by the Admissions Department (email: admissions@vumk.eu.)

Upon registration, all students are required to provide the following documents: duly filled in, printed out and signed Application forms - VUM Application form and CardiffMet Application form, Bachelor's degree (original or notarized copy), transcript of records from the Bachelor's degree (original or notarized copy), medical certificate, issued not earlier than 30 days prior the date on your application form, document for paid tuition and registration fees, 4 passport size photos.

Registration and enrollment of incoming exchange students (Erasmus+ Programme and other programmes resulting from partnership agreements between VUM and other higher education institutions) are processed by the VUM International Mobility Office (email: erasmus@vumk.eu).

10. ECTS at VUM

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is a learner-centered system for credit accumulation and transfer. It comprises the adoption of a series of tools with the aim to provide transparency of the degrees delivered at the different the higher education institutions, to enhance the horizontal and vertical student mobility and to provide the framework for comparability and full recognition of student academic results.

At VUM, the implementation of ECTS is stipulated in a separate document named **Rules and Regulation for ECTS Implementation at VUM**. The document is approved by the Rector's Council and available **here**. It is based on the Bulgarian Higher Education Act, the Ordinance 21/30.09.2004 of the Bulgarian Government for credit accumulation and transfer in the Bulgarian higher education institutions and the **ECTS Guide issued by the European Commission**.

ECTS credits at VUM

The ECTS credits are numerical expression of students' academic workload – contact hours and student- centred learning, necessary to achieve certain pre-defined learning outcomes. Education according to VUM curriculum

provides 60 ECTS for one academic year and 30 ECTS for one semester. VUM allocates 1 ECTS credit to 25 hours of workload for non-language and non-practice related subjects, and 1 ECTS credit to 30 hours of workload for languages and practice related module. VUM applies a flexible way for ECTS recognition gained by students in other universities based on the learning outcomes achieved. Recognition of ECTS gained in another academic institution is implemented by a Committee chaired by VUM Vice Rector for Academic Affairs and/or VUM Academic Director. The Committee discusses the academic transcript and information regarding student study results and the learning outcomes achieved. The decision of the Committee on the ECTS recognition is validated in a protocol.

According to the ECTS rules applicable, credits may be accumulated with a view to obtaining qualifications, as decided by the degree-awarding institution. If students have achieved learning outcomes in other learning contexts (non-formal or informal), the associated ECTS may be awarded after successful assessment, validation or recognition of these learning outcomes. Credits awarded in one study programme may be transferred to another programme on the same level of tertiary education, offered by the same or another institution. This transfer can only take place if the degree-awarding institution recognizes the credits and the associated learning outcomes. Partner institutions should agree in advance on the recognition of periods of study abroad. Credit transfer and accumulation are facilitated by the use of the ECTS key documents (Course Catalogue, Student Application Form, Learning Agreement for Studies/ Traineeship and Transcript of Records) as well as the Diploma Supplement.

Grading system

With the aim of making the grading systems in the different countries comparable, the ECTS grading system has been created. The ECTS grading system does not replace the local grading systems, but supplements those by being applied in the Transcript of Records. The grading system is defined as follows:

ECTS Grade	% of successful students achieving the grade	Definition
A	10	EXCELLENT – outstanding performance with only minor errors
B	25	VERY GOOD – above the average standard but with some minor errors
C	30	GOOD – generally sound work with a number of notable errors
D	25	SATISFACTORY – fair but with significant shortcomings
E	10	SUFFICIENT – performance meets the minimum criteria
FX	-	FAIL – some more work required before the credit can be awarded
F	-	FAIL – considerable further work is required

The Bulgarian grading system is based on numerals, where 6 is excellent, 5 is very good, 4 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 2 is poor. Passing grades are 3 through 6; 2 denote a failure.

Comparison between the Bulgarian grading system and the ECTS grading system:

ECTS Grade	Bulgarian Grade	Definition
A	6	EXCELLENT
B	5	VERY GOOD
C	4	GOOD
D	3	SATISFACTORY
E	3	SUFFICIENT
FX	2	FAIL
F	2	FAIL

ECTS Documents

VUM actively promotes the mobility of its full-time students and gladly welcomes incoming mobile students to spend

one or two semesters in Bulgaria. The compulsory documents used to administrate and facilitate both outgoing and incoming student mobilities are:

1) **Application Form**
2) **Learning Agreement for Studies/Traineeship** (in case of mobility for placements)
The Learning Agreement for Studies contains the list of courses to be taken and agreed upon by the student and the responsible academic body of the institution concerned. The Learning Agreement for Traineeship includes detailed information on the main activities to be carried out by the intern during the mobility as well as the key knowledge, skills and competences to be acquired by him/her upon successful completion of the mobility for placement.

Diploma Supplement

The **Diploma Supplement** is a personal document attached to a higher education degree, in order to make it easier for third persons – particularly prospective employers in another country – to understand what the diploma means in terms of knowledge and competences acquired by its holder. The Diploma Supplement was designed by UNESCO and the Council of Europe and was adopted by the European Parliament in 2004 (Decision No 2241/2004/EC on a single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences). The Diploma Supplement is a document, which provides information on the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed by the individual who holds the original degree to which the Diploma Supplement is attached. The Diploma Supplement does not replace the original degree and does not give any entitlement to formal recognition of the original diploma by academic authorities of other countries.

For students, the Diploma Supplement offers:
1) A diploma that is more readable and easily comparable abroad
2) A precise description of their academic career and the competencies acquired during the study period
3) An objective description of their achievements and competencies
4) Easier access to opportunities of work or further studies abroad
5) Last but not least, it fosters their employability.

In terms of benefits for the higher education institutions, the Diploma Supplement:
1) Facilitates academic and professional recognition, thus increases the transparency of qualifications
2) Protects the national and institutional autonomy while offering a common frame which is accepted across Europe
3) Promotes informed judgements about qualifications that can be understood in another educational context
4) Raises the visibility of the institution abroad;
5) Promotes the employability of their graduates at national and international level;
6) Helps to save time since it provides the answers to a lot of recurrent questions put to administrative services in institutions about the content and portability of diplomas

At VUM Diploma Supplement is issued to all VUM graduates. The language used is English and the issuance of the Diploma Supplement is free of charge.

11. Arrangements for academic guidance

Prospective full-time students should contact VUM Admissions Office (email: admissions@vum.bg). Students and staff of VUM partner universities interested in mobility at VUM are assisted by the VUM International Mobility Office (email: erasmus@vumk.eu).

The Programme Directors within the four Schools of VUM could further provide specific academic guidance.

Students receive day-to-day practical assistance and long-term career counseling and support at the Student Experience Department (email: student.experience@vumk.eu).

All academic and non-academic staff members of VUM apply open door policy.

Upon registration at VUM, students receive a copy of the **Internal Rules and Regulations** and are kindly invited to get acquainted with the document stipulating their rights and obligations as students of VUM. At the beginning of each academic year during the last week of September, VUM organizes an induction week for all newly admitted students. Specific induction weeks for the incoming mobile students are organized twice a year.