

ECTS Guide

Part 3: General Information for Students

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Cost of living

It is essential to know that full-time students from EU or EEA member states may be entitled to a standard student loan in Bulgaria to cover their tuition fees. All VUM full-time students are entitled to merit-based scholarships. If you have a typical student income, for example, you will find that approx. one third of it will be spent on housing. Food might outlay you another one third. Fortunately, VUM offers hot meals at reasonable prices at its two restaurants at VUM campus in Dobrich. Additionally, there are various eateries around the VUM campuses in Varna and Dobrich where students can eat healthy at reasonable prices. Of course, the least expensive way for students to eat is to do their own cooking. The apartments at VUM Student House in Dobrich are equipped with kitchenettes. The remaining one third of students' funds will be spent on books, travelling, and various other expenses.

A rough estimation of a student's monthly expenses (in EUR):

Accommodation (at VUM Student House) - 130

Pocket money - 100-150

Transport within the city -

Transport between cities - 25-30

Study materials - 15

Others - 20-50

Total: 290-375

The amounts are approximate and may vary depending on the student's individual lifestyle.

Accommodation

VUM offers accommodation at its main building in Varna and at VUM student house in Dobrich. VUM building in Varna is located in the center of the city and has double and single rooms. There is a kitchen equipped so students can cook different meals. Bathrooms are shared or individual depending on the type of accommodation the student chooses. The price of the rent varies from 70 Euro (for rooms with shared bathroom and up to 3 beds) to 160 Euro (for rooms with private bathroom and up to 2 beds) per bed per month, depending on the type of room. For more information, please contact VUM Facility Manager in Varna at stoyan.dimitrov53@abv.bg.

In Dobrich, students live at the recently built VUM student house. It is located in the city center within 10-minute walking distance from VUM academic building. Each apartment has 3 rooms. The price per room varies between 120 Euro to 180 Euros depending on the size of the room (single, double, and triple). Some options are: single room – 120 Euro, double room – 150 Euro (75 Euro for one bed), Triple room – 180 Euro (60 Euro for one bed). The price does not include the costs of water, electricity and gas. Bills are paid separately every month. Each student has to pay dormitory security deposit of 80

Euro which is paid upon the student's arrival and returned when the student leaves the dormitory. Rooms are furnished and the kitchenettes are equipped with stoves. Students need to buy their own glasses, plates, eating utensils, pots, pans and other necessities for cooking and eating. For more information, please contact: nikolay.georgiev@vumk.eu.

Another student dormitory of VUM is located in Dobrich city park - around 300 meters from VUM academic building. The rooms have refrigerators, electric kettles, TV sets, air conditioning (optional). Accommodation is offered in single and double rooms. The cost is approximately 5 EUR/day per student in a double room and includes all utility fees (electricity, heating, water, etc). The building also houses the "Ben the Bear" restaurant. One of the wings of VUM academic building in Dobrich is equipped with a ramp and an elevator for people with disabilities. All guest rooms in that wing have free wi-fi connection, central heating system, refrigerators, and private bathrooms. The rooms are subject to availability.

If students wish to find private accommodation, they are free to do so. However, for safety and security reasons, it is highly recommended to new students, both full-time and exchange students, to benefit from the accommodation options offered by VUM. The VUM student houses have 24-hour video surveillance and no external visitors are allowed in after 10 pm. Furthermore, most of VUM students are accommodated there which makes everyone's stay even more beneficial and valuable from intercultural awareness and communication point of view.

Meals

There are two restaurants at VUM campus in Dobrich where students can eat healthy local and international food. The restaurants serve a variety of salads, soups and hot meals as well as sandwiches, yoghurt, desserts, fruit and drinks. Restaurants are open from 9 am until 6 pm every day. Within walking distance from VUM academic buildings in Varna and Dobrich, there are many restaurants, pharmacies, supermarkets, grocery stores, markets, shopping centers and clothing shops.

Medical facilities

Healthcare insurance is compulsory for everyone. All insured people in Bulgaria select their family doctor (General Practitioner) whom they visit whenever necessary. If the general practitioner is not competent to treat the illness, he or she provides written permission to the patient to visit a specialist also working with the National Health Insurance Fund.

Foreign students should get in touch with their National Health Service in order to obtain the required documentation to be able to use the Bulgarian National Health System before coming to Bulgaria.

Hospitals in Varna:

1. Saint Anna General Hospital

100 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd

Phone: 052 – 655911, 052 – 613777, 052 – 648231

E-mail: contacts@svetaanna-varna.com

2. Saint Marina General Hospital

1 Hristo Smirnenski Blvd

Phone: 052 – 302851

E-mail: officeub@mail.bg

3. Military Hospital

3 Hristo Smirnenski Blvd

Phone: 052 - 386210

Hospitals in Dobrich:

1. General Hospital Dobrich

24 Panayot Hitov St

Phone: 058 - 600488

Email: oblg@bergon.net

2. Diagnostic – Consultative Center I

3 D. Petkov St

Phone: 058 - 602776

3. Diagnostic – Consultative Center II

68 25th September Blvd

Phone: 058 – 600854

The National Emergency Number for any type of emergency/disaster situations is 112.

Facilities for students with special needs

VUM acknowledges that it is the University's proactive duty to serve the educational needs of all students and staff. As such, the university is equipped with ramps and elevators for students/staff/faculty/visitors with special needs.

Insurance

Foreign students who need to apply for a student visa have to obtain a valid health insurance prior to their departure to Bulgaria. Students from EU countries are required to apply for a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) in their home country for emergency type of health coverage at public hospitals throughout the EU. Incoming mobile students often have health insurance from their sending university. International students who are citizens of non-EU countries have to purchase an insurance for Bulgaria with a minimum coverage amount of 30 000 Euro or 60 000 Leva for the period of their residence permit card or student visa.

Financial support for students

VUM provides financial support to a large number of its full-time students with excellent academic performance. First year students can apply for a scholarship of up to € 1,000, as the exact amount is determined by the students' scores of the English entry exam or from the internationally recognized tests such as IELTS, TOEFL etc. For more information about financial assistance, please contact the Student Affairs Office (Email: academic@vumk.eu).

Student Affairs Office

VUM offers a wide range of services to its students in order to assist them in their transition into the social and academic life of the institution. Some of the services include international students' assistance, housing assistance, career advice and placements assistance and others. VUM has a specific department dealing with student issues outside the classroom, namely the Student Welfare and Career Center (student.welfare@vumk.eu). Any questions concerning students' studies and education are dealt with at the Student Affairs Office (academic@vumk.eu).

The Student Affairs Office and the Student Welfare and Career Center in cooperation with the International Cooperation Department and the Marketing and Admissions Office organize various student events and activities such as awards ceremonies, blood donations, charity events, Christmas dinners and parties, dance classes, graduation ceremony, international festivals, music festivals, seminars, workshops, talent shows, educational trips abroad, documentaries screening, and many more. The above listed offices also organize various induction events for new students to welcome them to VUM community. The latter inform students about the various services available, help new students meet upper classmantes and find out their options for extracurricular activities.

Learning facilities

The premises of VUM are equipped with modern facilities and feature contemporary business environment. The buildings are located in the centre of the cities of Varna and Dobrich. Classrooms and

lecture auditoriums with more than 1 000 seats in total are spread over an area of around 50,000 square meters and feature modern equipment for studying and practical training. Larger study rooms and lecture auditoriums accommodate 100, 60, 40 or 30 students each. Problem-Based Learning sessions and Case-Based Learning sessions as well as language classes take place in smaller classrooms suitable for 20 students. All classrooms have access to wireless Internet connection.

The library, the bookshop, and the copy centre are located on the ground floor of the academic building in Dobrich. VUM has five computer labs equipped with over 100 PCs, 15 printers, and copy machines. The software applications used by the different majors, such as "Opera" and "Fidelio" booking systems, "Clock restaurant management software", and other software packages related to accounting, finance and management, are pre-installed on all computers in all computer labs.

VUM is one of the few higher education institutions in Bulgaria, which has its own training facilities. Practical training of students enrolled in Hospitality and Tourism Management related programmes takes place in Albena restaurant. It is located on the third floor of VUM building in Dobrich and its dining hall can accommodate between 150 and 200 customers. Its kitchen is built and equipped so that students can train and customers can be served at the same time. Training also takes place at the restaurant's dining hall and the training bar. These training facilities allow students to practice various skills in a real-life setting and help them master the ability to handle practical issues related to their future profession.

Besides restaurant Albena, VUM operates training facilities in the summer resort of Albena - the Academic Bistro and 8 hotel rooms. Moreover, VUM operates the Summer Theatre entertainment complex in Dobrich. The latter consists of two restaurants, an open-air cocktail bar, a BBQ, 10 hotel rooms, and an outdoor Summer Theatre with 2 000 seats. It is built over an area of 6 000 square meters in Dobrich City Park and is close to the university building. It serves as an excellent training facility for internships in both Hospitality and Marketing. Students can also use the outdoor theatre as a venue for art events, student parties, and other entertainment events.

For educational purposes VUM has established "Inter Ltd." Accountancy and Consultancy House and "E-tours Ltd." Tourist Agency, which are also part of the university training facilities. Therefore, students are given the opportunity to do their traineeships in real-life business environment, yet under the supervision of experienced professionals with extensive knowledge of the training and education processes.

International programmes

VUM participates in the Erasmus+ programme for student and staff mobility which involves annual mobility of incoming and outgoing students and teaching and non-teaching staff members.

The International Cooperation Department is in charge of the Erasmus+ programme management and administration. All relevant information targeted at current and prospective Erasmus+ programme beneficiaries (incoming and outgoing, students and staff) could be found at erasmusplus.vum.bg. The Erasmus+ team members have extensive international learning and work experience, speak at least two foreign languages and provide full support to both mobile students and staff.

VUM has participated in the former Erasmus Intensive Programmes (Erasmus IPs) under the Lifelong Learning Programme, Tempus Programme, Leonardo da Vinci/Transfer of Innovation projects and others programmes for higher education institutions within and outside the European Community. As a result of these initiatives, the number of VUM students establishing their own business start-ups has increased. Also, the exchange of good practices in many areas of higher education has helped many universities from the Eastern Neighbouring Area modernise their systems and procedures and increase their efficiency in providing high quality education to their students.

Currently, VUM is coordinating various Erasmus+ projects both within Key Activity 1 and within Key Activity 2, namely KA103 Credit Mobility Project for Programme countries, KA107 International Credit Mobility Project for Programme and Partner countries as well as a project within the Capacity Building in Higher Education programme.

Practical information for mobile students

The International Cooperation Department is in charge of the organization, facilitation and implementation of the Erasmus+ mobility programme. The staff members provide constant support to all incoming and outgoing students throughout the year. Mobile students are assisted before, during and after their mobility in the framework of consultations, one-to-one sessions, online meetings etc. For the outgoing students, the International Cooperation Department organizes specific information days and events on a regular basis and with the participation of former Erasmus+ students.

Information about the application procedures, academic calendar, VUM curriculum and course schedule, accommodation and traveling is provided to all incoming students and they are encouraged to contact VUM International Cooperation Department as soon as their home institutions have nominated them. Due to the relatively small size of the university, VUM strives to apply a tailor-made approach to its incoming students. Upon their arrival to VUM, at the beginning of every semester an induction week

is organized for them. Its purpose is to introduce the incoming students to the social and academic life at VUM and to provide them with support in the process of integration. The induction week events also provide general information about Bulgaria, Varna and Dobrich and discuss safety measures, living expenses and accommodation as well as answer any remaining questions the students may have.

Pickup services and transportation

The university offers airport pick-up service for all newly arrived foreign students upon request. For more information please contact the International Cooperation Department (erasmus@vumk.eu).

Language courses

In August, prior to the beginning of each academic year VUM organizes intensive English language courses for all first year students. Students are split in groups depending on the results of their entry language exam. The aim of these courses is to help students with insufficient English language knowledge to adapt to the language of communication at VUM and prepare for their studies. These courses are open to all the mobile students as well. The English language courses are delivered by teachers of the Foreign Languages Department and are free of charge for all students. During the academic year, VUM provides coaching and language support to all students with lower study results or identified difficulties in communicating in English. Along with English, the Foreign Languages Department at VUM also offers language courses in Spanish, German, French and Russian. To support their smooth adjustment to local life, upon request a course in Bulgarian Language and Culture is offered to all international students. For more information, please, contact the International Cooperation Department (Email: erasmus@vumk.eu).

Internships

VUM students may apply for an internship at a local enterprise through VUM Student Welfare and Career Center. The Center provides students and alumni with up-to-date information about available job positions and internships in the field of Business, Management, Tourism and Hospitality. In addition, the VUM Student Welfare and Career Center is in charge of career counseling and provides coaching to students interested in business start-up. During the academic year, the Center organizes a series of workshops and seminars which aim to broaden the horizon of the students on their career prospective. Career Days are organized at VUM annually. For more information, please contact VUM Student Welfare and Career Centre (Email: student.welfare@vumk.eu)

Full-time students may also apply for Erasmus+ Mobility for Placement at the International Cooperation Department. The student mobility for placement has a minimum duration of 2 months and typically

takes place at an enterprise or at one of VUM partner universities within the EU. For more information, please contact the International Cooperation Department (Email: erasmus@vumk.eu).

Sports and leisure facilities

The sports facilities at VUM include a sports hall, licensed by the Bulgarian Ministry of Youth and Sport, where students can play basketball, volleyball and handball. The sports hall is also used for extracurricular activities such as dancing and yoga classes. Students can use the following gym equipment available at VUM sports hall: treadmill, elliptical trainer, weight training equipment, weight machines. Students interested in golf can also enroll in golf courses organized at VUM upon request. There are three golf resorts close to Varna and Dobrich where students can practice.

Student associations

Students of VUM can join one or more of the following clubs and societies: Sports Club, Dancing Club, Club in Journalism and Writing. VUM is highly committed to internationalization and multiculturalism, diversity and a culture of peace. The Marketing and Admissions Department (Email: marketing@vumk.eu) and the International Cooperation Department (Email: erasmus@vumk.eu) encourage foreign students to interact with their fellow classmates and to learn about their cultures through all forms of creative art, music, singing, dancing and food. An International Students Week at VUM is traditionally organized twice a year and includes a series of cultural events and culinary adventures.