



ECTS Guide

Part 1: Information on Varna University of Management

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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

Academic calendar

Academic year 2016/2016

1st Semester: 26th September 2016 – 27th January 2017

2nd Semester: 30th January 2017 – 19th May 2017

3rd (Summer) Semester: 5th June 2017 – 8th September 2017

Christmas break: 23rd December 2016 – 13th January 2017

Public holidays

1st January: New Year's Day

3rd March: Liberation Day

14th April 2017: Good Friday

16th and 17th April 2017: Easter

1st May: Labour Day

6th May: St. George's Day

24th May: Bulgarian Education and Culture and Slavonic Literature Day

6th September: Unification Day

22nd September: Independence Day

24th December: Christmas Eve

25th, 26th December: Christmas Days

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

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Director of International Cooperation Department

Christina Armutlieva

Email: christina.armutlieva@vumk.eu

Academic Director

Vanina Valcheva

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Head of Students Admissions

Pavel Yordanov

Email: pavel.yordanov@vumk.eu

Student Council President

Yordan Zhelev

Email: student.council@vumk.eu

General information on the institution

Varna University of Management (VUM; in Bulgarian Visshe Uchilishte po Menidzhmant Varna) is a private higher education institution and the legal successor of International University College (IUC). The latter was founded in 1999. By decision of the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria from 21st May 2015, published in the State Gazette of the Republic of Bulgaria on 26th May 2015, IUC was converted into VUM.

VUM provides high quality of education and training fully delivered in English in diverse multicultural settings. VUM undergraduate and Master programmes are in the fields of Business and Management, Tourism and Hospitality, and Software Engineering and Business Information Systems. The capacity of VUM has quadrupled over the past few years, which is primarily due to the increasing popularity of VUM abroad, its highly skilled lecturers, the unmatched level of practice-oriented education, and the rapidly growing number of international students.

VUM positive reputation at international level is based on a long-term experience in hosting both exchange students and staff. VUM is strongly committed to the principles of academic internationalization and provides supportive multicultural academic environment. More than 25% of VUM student body consists of international students who come from over 40 countries. VUM actively participates in a large number of international bilateral and multilateral projects and cooperates with more than 80 universities from the European Union, Norway and Turkey as well as with over 80 other universities from the Eastern Neighboring Area, Northern Africa, Central Asia, the Far East, South America, Mexico and the USA.

VUM team's long-term efforts and work have been also internationally recognized and validated. VUM was recently ranked first worldwide by **U-Multirank** in terms of student mobility and internationalization among the business schools offering undergraduate programmes in the field of social sciences and business. In addition, VUM owns three palms of excellence within the Eduniversal ranking system and its MBA programme is ranked 13th in Central and Eastern Europe by **best-masters.com**. The latter ranking system ranks also VUM Master programme in International Hospitality and Tourism Management 47th worldwide. Last but not least, according to SSRN, in terms of research and number of publications VUM faculty and students have earned the university 250th place among the business schools worldwide. VUM is proud that its faculty is engaged in various international science and research projects and VUM issues internationally recognized science journals such as **European Journal of Tourism Research (EJTR)** and VUM Management Review. In particular, EJTR is worth mentioning as according to Scopus it is among the highest ranked European journals in the field of tourism research.

List of programmes offered

BA International Business and Management
BA International Hospitality Management
BA International Tourism Management
BA Software Engineering
Master of Business Administration

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 Erasmus+ 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).

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) as well VUM Student Welfare and Career Center (student.welfare@vumk.eu).

General registration procedures

Registration and enrollment of newly admitted students at VUM is processed by the Academic Affairs Department (Email: academic@vumk.eu.)

Upon registration, all students are required to provide the following documents: original of High School Diploma, properly filled out enrollment form, copy of foreign ID/ passport for foreign students, two photographs, medical certificate, invoice for the prepaid tuition fee for the first semester.

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 International Cooperation Department (Email: erasmus@vumk.eu) with the support of the Academic Affairs Department with the assistance of the International Cooperation Department.

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 (nonformal 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
- v) Last but not least, it fosters their employability.

In terms of benefits for the 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;
- v) Promotes the employability of their graduates at national and international level;
- vi) 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.

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 Erasmus+ Team within VUM International Cooperation Department (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 Career Center (Email: career@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.