



VRIJE
UNIVERSITEIT
BRUSSEL

**RESEARCH
MASTER IN**

GERON TOLO GICAL SCIENCES

www.vub.ac.be/gerontological-sciences

**120
ECTS**

2019-2020



WHY VUB?

VUB education creates strong individuals, critical minds and world citizens

Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) offers high-quality English-taught programmes, supported by outstanding research. Being a student at VUB means learning in an open atmosphere of tolerance and diversity, as well as growing into an independent and critical-thinking individual.

VUB is a comprehensive university and offers education on student-friendly campuses in the cosmopolitan city of Brussels. At VUB, lecturers and assistants are available and approachable to students. Faculty members are on hand to answer questions and teaching is often done in small groups to ensure close interaction and hands-on experience.

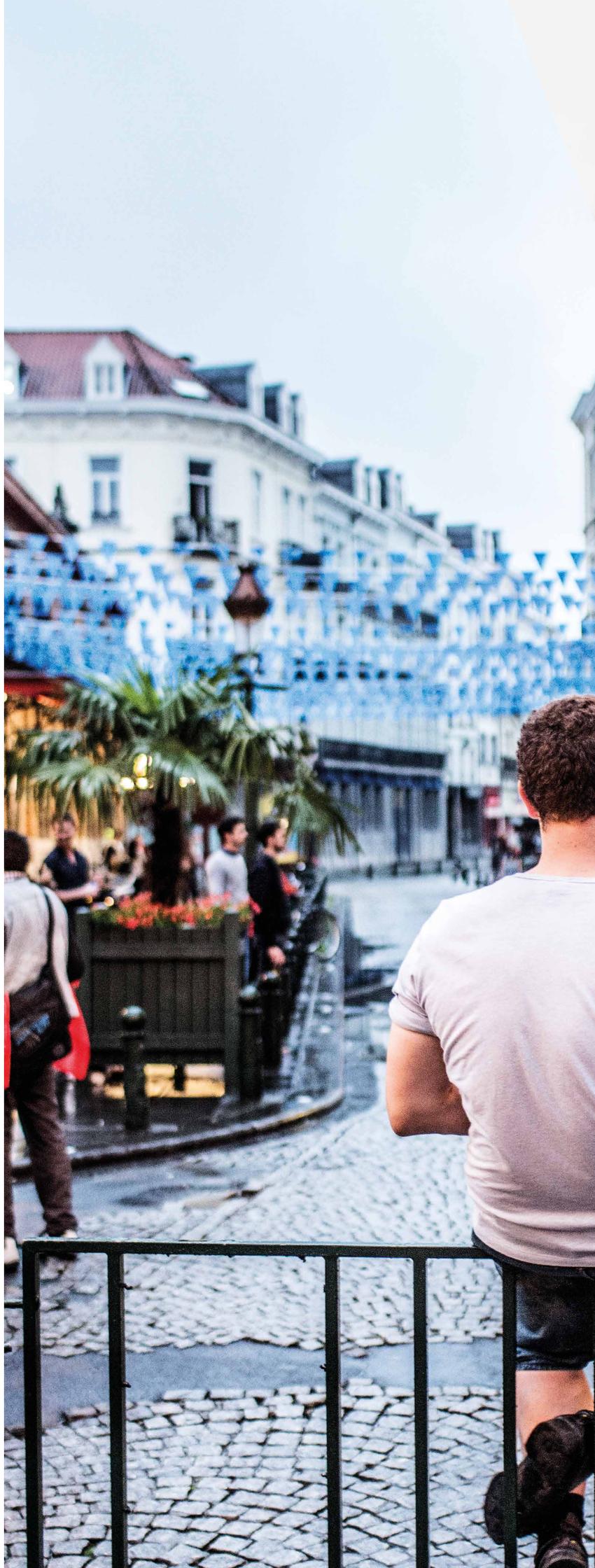
VUB is a dynamic and modern university with almost two centuries of history. We welcome more than 15.000 students, 21% of which are international students from more than 120 different countries.

The basis of our academic success

Vrije Universiteit Brussel was founded on the principle of 'free inquiry' as formulated by the French mathematician and philosopher of science Henri Poincaré (1854-1912):

"Thinking must never submit itself, neither to a dogma, nor to a party, nor to a passion, nor to an interest, nor to a preconceived idea, nor to anything whatsoever, except to the facts themselves, because for it to submit to anything else would be the end of its existence."

Personal development, open-mindedness, a positive and critical attitude and a sense of responsibility are characteristics that you will encounter in everyone at the university: from professors and researchers to students and staff members. It lies at the basis of our academic success.





A unique master

The Research Master in Gerontological Sciences offers a specific training trajectory to those excellent students who want to build up an academic career in the field of Gerontology. The program also provides an ideal preparation for starting a PhD in the domain of Gerontology.



RESEARCH MASTER IN GERONTOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Gerontology is the future

The world population is ageing. International organizations, such as the World Health Organization, consider the ageing population as one of the major topics that need immediate and thorough attention. Progressive ageing of the population is a worldwide phenomenon nowadays. The Research Master in Gerontological Sciences provides students with the necessary knowledge, insights and methodologies to critically answer the various biological, biomedical, psychological and social questions concerning ageing societies, without neglecting intercultural aspects.

Boost your scientific career

The Research Master in Gerontological Sciences paves the way for a successful doctorate in Gerontology by providing theoretical, but also methodological knowledge and skills for research into ageing and older people. Highly educated people can transfer pertinent knowledge about ageing and the older people to different settings/ environments from a multidisciplinary perspective.

PhD holders in Gerontology can be engaged in the various universities as a postdoc fellow or a senior academic staff. The university is obviously not the only place where research is conducted. Alumni can also build a research career at the Flemish and Federal research institutions. In addition, PhD holders in Gerontology can be engaged in policy functions and doctorate holders are desired in services from the welfare and health care that focus on innovation, quality, development and implementation of clinical pathways and guidelines and / or research.

During the Research Master of Gerontological Sciences, the students will write two articles (one review article in the first year and one original research article in the second year) and submit them for publication in an international peer-reviewed journal. In addition, they will have to deliver a research proposal for a doctoral fellowship at the end of the first semester of the second year, which may be submitted in one of the known channels (FWO PhD fellowship fundamental research, FWO PhD fellowship strategic basic research, ...).

Unique and interdisciplinary research

The Research Master in Gerontological Sciences is unique in its kind in Belgium and surroundings. It is the only programme that studies the field of gerontology on a broad and multidisciplinary basis. It offers a wide spectrum of scientific aspects that is essential to understand the field of gerontology. The programme investigates the biogerontological and biomedical basis underlying the ageing process. But it also discusses the psychological, social and health policy aspects of older persons, like for example ethical themes and intercultural aspects. Students are stimulated to start from the principle of 'free inquiry' in order to reflect critically on current gerontological problems

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Furthermore, the employment opportunities can also be found in various centres of excellence (for example, centre of excellence in dementia care), policy support centres, umbrella organizations and private research centres. These less traditional sectors require tasks such as data analysis, advisers, consultants, etc. to function. Besides the universities and scientific institutions, industries are also an increasingly important market for doctors. It is considered, therefore, that doctors in Gerontology would find themselves in R&D departments of large companies.

Students will have the opportunity to get embedded in ongoing interdisciplinary research projects of our associated research groups such as the Frailty in Ageing (FRIA) research group (www.vub.ac.be/FRIA).

Examples of ongoing research projects:

- The BrUssels sTudy on The Early pRedictors of FraiLTY (BUTTERFLY): longitudinal study identifying bio-psycho-social determinants for active and healthy aging and for early stages of frailty in the oldest old.
- The Senior PRoject INTensive Training (SPRINT): intervention trial investigating the mechanisms by which different exercise programs improve immunity and bio-psycho-social functioning in older adults.
- Exercise therapy for osteoarthritis pain: intervention study to examine (anti-)

inflammation and endogenous analgesia as mediators for the effect exercise on pain in patients with osteoarthritis

- E-Health in nursing homes: qualitative research project exploring needs and preferences of formal caregivers on e-health applications in nursing homes
- Meaningful Activities in the Nursing Home: mixed methods research project guiding nursing homes in innovative attitudes towards residents' meaningful ADL
- The age-friendliness of cities: mixed methods research project investigating constraints and opportunities for older people living in urban environments
- The Belgian ageing studies: survey-based research programme investigating the social needs of older persons; several specific focusses possible including loneliness and suicide.
- Scale-Up an integrated care package for diaBetes and hYpertension (SCUBY): mixed methods project investigating care packages impact outcomes and efficiency in Cambodia, Slovenia and Belgium.



MASTER YEAR 1	SEM	ECTS
Master Classes Statistics (Quantitative & Qualitative)	1+2	6
Biological and Biomedical Fundamentals of Ageing	1	6
Psychological Fundamentals of Ageing	1	6
Social Fundamentals of Ageing	1	6
Ethics Related to Ageing	1	3
Systematic Literature Review Part 1	1	3
Systematic Literature Review Part 2	2	9
Clinimetrics and Comprehensive Gerontological Assessment	2	6
Master Thesis Part 1	2	6
Writing a Research Application Part 1	2	6
Organisational and Intercultural Aspects of Ageing	2	3
Total		60

MASTER YEAR 2	SEM	ECTS
Scientific Internship Part 1	1	18
Elective Courses	1	6
Advanced Master Classes Statistics (Quantitative & Qualitative)	1	3
Writing a Research Application Part 2	1	3
Master Thesis Part 2	2	24
Scientific Internship Part 2	2	6
Total		60

PROGRAMME

The courses in the programme can be divided into two themes: gerontology and research methodology. The former focuses on the biological, biomedical, psychological and social aspects of gerontology, making you an expert in the field. The latter offers you skills to do research in the field of gerontology.

The foundations will be discussed in a package of course units that provides a thorough Bio-Psycho-social concept of Gerontological Sciences. Students will identify a topic at the end of the first semester of the first year, on which substantive work will continue under the supervision of a promoter through the master curriculum. Although this might implicate a certain degree of 'specialisation' in a certain domain of the Gerontological Sciences, most – if not all – research projects in which the students will be involved have a typical interdisciplinary character. Given the nature of this programme and the intensive coaching, daily presence on campus is required.

This is a two-year programme of 120 credits.

*The programme is subject to change.
Check www.vub.ac.be/en for the latest information about the programme.*

*ECTS (European Credit Transfer System):
1 credit represents 25-30 hours of study activity.*

INTER- NATIONAL SETTING

Reflecting on gerontology from an international perspective

The programme reflects on gerontological issues from an international point of view. Since ageing of the population is a global phenomenon, it also attracts an international student group. This international setting, combined with small student groups, allows for discussion and exchange of ideas. This offers an interesting international perspective on biological, biomedical, ethical, social and psychological themes.

Study at the heart of the EU

Brussels appeals to a lot of international students, and each year about 70.000 students seek higher education in the city. This shouldn't come as a surprise. Belgian education is internationally renowned for its high standard, and Brussels is a multicultural, cosmopolitan city. It's a hub for cultural activities and it houses numerous international institutions, companies and embassies.

Brussels is the sixth leading European business city according to Cushman & Wakefield. This means, studying Gerontological Sciences here opens up a world of opportunities for your career. The short travel times by high-speed train to cities like Amsterdam (2h), London (2h) or Paris (1,5h) put Brussels at the heart of Europe. There is no better location for you to study and start your career.



"We aim to contribute to a better understanding of the ageing processes and the development of bio-psycho-social strategies to avoid (unnecessary) accelerated ageing. This is the way forward to an evidence-based promotion of healthy ageing and to protect our society from unproven 'anti-ageing' remedies."

Prof. Ivan Bautmans,
programme director



+12 nationalities



English-taught programme



Broad view on gerontology

ADMISSION CRITERIA

The Research Master of Gerontological Sciences is aimed at students with an academic Bachelor or Master degree:

- Bachelor of Political Sciences and Sociology specialisation Sociology Minor Management, Care and Policy in Gerontology (VUB);
- Bachelor in a field relevant to Gerontology (Social Sciences, Biomedical Sciences, Psychology, Physical Education and Kinesiology, Rehabilitation Sciences and Physiotherapy, ...);
- Preparatory Programme in Management, Care and Policy in Gerontology (VUB).

Candidate students from outside the EEA may require evidence of adequate knowledge of English through one of the following criteria:

- Holder of a diploma of primary, secondary or higher education where English was the language of instruction;
- Successfully completed at least 1 school year of secondary education where English was the language of instruction;
- Successfully completed an education programme in the higher education sector where at least 15 ECTS credits were taught in English;
- Successfully completed general secondary education in Belgium;

- Succeeded in one of the following language tests:
 - a. TOEFL: minimum level 213 computer-based, 80 internet-based;
 - b. IELTS: minimum level academic module 6.5;
 - c. Cambridge Certificate of Advanced English (CAE), grade B;
 - d. Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE), grade C;
 - e. TOEIC: minimum level: 860.

Exceptions to the language requirement may be granted by the programme director on the basis of an interview. Prospective students will be selected by the programme director on the basis of a well-justified application and an interview. The following criteria will be used to rank and select candidates:

- Motivation for starting the Research Master of Gerontological Sciences
- Interest in at least one of the following research areas within the Gerontology:
 - o Biological and Biomedical Gerontology
 - o Social Gerontology
 - o Psychological Gerontology
 - o Organization of health care in an ageing and intercultural society
- Study results obtained in the previous education can also be taken into consideration but is not an absolute eligibility criterion.

Application deadline

Prospective students are advised to apply as soon as possible, even if they have not yet obtained their degree. Applications can only be submitted through our website www.vub.ac.be/en/apply

- Students who require a visa (non-EU/EEA nationals) need to submit their application before April 1st
- Students who do not require a visa must apply before September 1st
- Note: if the proof of English proficiency or APS certificate is not ready before the deadline, you can always submit it later instead of missing the deadline

Tuition fees

The tuition fee for the Research Master in Gerontological Sciences for 2019-2020 is € 939/year and € 3243/year for respectively EEA and non-EEA students, given you take up all 60 credits in one year. A detailed overview of the tuition fee and its calculation can be found on:

www.vub.ac.be/en/tuition-fees

Contact

www.vub.ac.be/gerontological-sciences