

Royal Military Academy

Guide for international students

Welcoming students - Changing lives - Opening minds





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▪ Rector's welcome words

Dear student,
Dear trainee,

Welcome to the Royal Military Academy of Belgium!

Today, if you read these lines, it is because you are one of us. We are glad you joined our academy this year to study, work and evolve together with our cadets and trainees.

The RMA is a military institution of university level entitled to deliver bachelor, master and doctoral degrees in accordance with the Bologna process. Leading scientific research linked to Defence interests is also paramount as well as expertise related to the civil and military society.

Loyal to our primary mission, we incorporate military, physical and character training into our academic programme allowing our graduates to fully taking on their role as leaders or managers in the Belgian Defence.

The mission of the RMA has always been to train and educate officers by enabling them to command and take charge in complex situations in favour of the national and international community. Hence, our operating mode and our structures are in constant evolution in order to cope with the ever-mutating society we are living in.

Internationalisation and globalisation is not a choice anymore... it is a fact and became a necessity. In this increasingly globalised world, it is important to promote an international dimension in all areas of expertise. Therefore, the RMA decided to develop their international offer by incorporating foreign students and trainees to its education programmes and by increasing mobility of cadets, teaching and research staff through Europe and abroad. Thus, widening our education network and establishing a series of mutually beneficial partnerships.

This international student guide, which includes practical information regarding the RMA, our country and life in Belgium, should help you during your first contacts within our academy, Belgium, Brussels and our fellow citizens.

I wish you a successful and profitable experience,



Yves Dupont Rear Admiral, MSc Eng
Commander and rector
Royal Military Academy





• General information about Belgium

(Ref.: Belgian Foreign Affairs website, Belgian Tourist Office website and Wikipedia website)

A brief history:



• Revolution and independence:

At the Congress of Vienna, in 1815, Belgium (The Southern Netherlands) and the Northern Netherlands (Holland) were united to form one State. This new state was ruled by King William I. Although his policy was beneficial to the Belgian bourgeoisie, there was protest. The Catholics objected to the interference of the protestant king in clerical matters. The Liberals demanded more freedom. In 1828, Catholics and Liberals drew up a concerted programme of demands. The association between Catholics and Liberals was called unionism.

After a series of incidents, the revolution erupted in Brussels in 1830. William I sent in his troops, but they were expelled on September 27th, 1830. The rebels received support from volunteers outside the city. Following this rising, Belgium separated from the Northern Netherlands. A provisional government declared independence on October 4th, 1830.

On November 3th of the same year, a National Congress was

elected by an electorate of 30,000 men, who paid a given level of taxes or who had special qualifications. On February 7th, 1831 the national congress adopted a constitution which, for its time, was very progressive.

• 1830 to 1908:

A diplomatic conference on the future of Belgium opened in London on the November 4th. The great powers of the time recognised the secession of Belgium from the (Northern) Netherlands. Leopold I of Saxe-Coburg became the first King of the Belgians (1831 - 1865). In 1865 he was succeeded by his son Leopold II (1865 - 1909). Under their reign, Belgium became the second most important industrial power. Both kings wanted to secure Belgium's economic independence by promoting colonial expeditions, but they were not successful in this until the end of the 19th century. It was at this time that Leopold II backed expeditions by Henry Stanley to the Congo basin. He entered into agreements with local chiefs, which resulted in a confederation of states. At first the Belgian government and parliament had no hand in the king's operations. Since Leopold II had been the first occupant of areas in Central Africa, he held a strong position at the Conference of Berlin in 1884. His demands were met. In 1885, the Belgian parliament agreed that Leopold II should become the head of state of the Congo. In 1908, control of Congo was transferred to the Belgian state.

• World Wars:

Although the great powers forced Belgium to remain neutral when it became independent, it could not escape World War I. The Belgian army under the command of King Albert I (1909 - 1934) was too small and

• General information about Belgium

not a match for the Germans, it nevertheless could manage to halt the enemy at the riverbanks of the Yser. Belgium suffered a lot during the war. The Yser region was laid waste.

The years after the war were very difficult. The international economic crisis affected the country. When Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany, the dangers posed by that country rose again. From 1936, onwards Belgium took a neutral stance, just as it had done before the 1914 - 1918 war, but Germany invaded again on May 10th, 1940. After 18 days king Leopold III, (1934 - 1951) decided to capitulate. This decision provoked a rupture with the government. After the war, the royal question dominated politics. In 1951 Leopold III abdicated in favour of his son Baudouin I. This king reigned until his death in 1993. On August 9th 1993, his brother Albert II became the sixth King of the Belgians.

A federal state:

The question of relations between the communities has played a highly important part in recent Belgian history. Following six state reforms, Belgium was transformed into a federal state. The political scene is also dominated by economic problems and increased internationalisation. Belgium played an important role in the creation of the Belgian-Luxembourg Economic Union, the Benelux and the European Union. As a member of the United Nations, and in the service of world peace, Belgium often sends its troops on peace missions or sends its observers across the world.

• Facts about Belgium:

Official name	Kingdom of Belgium
Head of State	King Philippe
Prime Minister	Alexander De Croo
Capital	Brussels
Flag	
Motto	Unity makes Strength
Government	Federal Parliamentary Constitutional Monarchy
Area	30.688 km ²
Population (2021)	11.507.163 inhabitants
Official languages	Dutch, French and German
Religion	Christian (61%), None (32%), Islam (5%), Other (2%)
National Day	21 July
Currency	Euro (EUR)
Border countries	France, Germany, Luxemburg, The Netherlands
Members of	European Union, NATO, United Nations...
Time zone	GMT+1
Summer time zone	GMT+2 (end of March to end of October)
Weights and measures	Metric system



▪ General information about Belgium

Domestic electricity	220-230 volts
Country code	BE
Calling code	+32

https://www.belgium.be/en/about_belgium/country/belgium_in_nutshell/filing_card_belgium

Geography and climate:

Belgium is situated in the west of Europe, bordered to the north by the Netherlands, to the east by Germany and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and to the south and the west by France. Although its surface area of 30,688 km² makes it a small country, its location has made it the economic and urban nerve centre of Europe.

Belgium has three main geographical regions; the coastal plain in the northwest and the central plateau both belong to the Anglo-Belgian Basin, and the Ardennes uplands in the southeast to the Hercynian orogenic belt. The Paris Basin reaches a small fourth area at Belgium's southernmost tip, Belgian Lorraine.

The coastal plain consists mainly of sand dunes and polders. Further inland lays a smooth, slowly rising landscape irrigated by numerous waterways, with fertile valleys and the north eastern sandy plain of the Campine (Kempen). The thickly forested hills and plateaus of the Ardennes are more rugged and rocky with caves and small gorges. Extending westward into France, this area is eastwardly connected to the Eifel in Germany by the High Fens plateau, on which the Signal de Botrange forms the country's highest point at 694 m.

The climate is maritime temperate with significant precipitation in all seasons, like most of northwest Europe. The average temperature is lowest in January at 3 °C and highest in July at 18 °C. The average precipitation per month varies between 54 mm for February and April, to 78 mm for July.

Tourism:

Whether you are looking for a weekend break or a longer trip, Belgium has a lot to offer to tourists. If you enjoy walking, sports and the outdoors, the Ardennes, which are the green heart of Belgium, are your place to go. If you prefer the beach, water sports, sailing or cycling, the seaside is calling you.

Belgium also has splendid art cities, even if you are not a fan of history, architecture or culture; and Belgians love gastronomy. They love good food and will invite you to taste their special beers and cheeses and obviously their chocolate, sweets, endives, beef stew, speculoos and much more... of course, the fries are simply legendary.



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Above all, Belgium is a place of fun: it has a very vibrant cultural scene (exhibits, concerts, festivals, theatre, dance...) and its night life is a big celebration.

• The Coast:

The coast's 65 kilometre long stretch of sandy coastline has 15 resorts, each with its own character and unique atmosphere. The sandy beaches are ideal for children. The beaches shelve gently out to sea, and lifeguards ensure everyone's safety.

The Belgian coast offers a wide range of sport and recreation facilities: here you can hire a bicycle or a buggy, or go sailing or fishing. The wide beach is ideal for ball games, horse riding and beach surfing.

The summer months are the busiest period for the coast. However, other seasons have their charm too, even if sunbathing is not part of it. There are plenty of alternatives on the coast. Close by, there is Bruges, one of Belgium's finest cities of art. A visit to this historic city is a must.

• The Ardennes:

Situated in the south-east of Belgium, they are one of nature's unspoilt areas, rich in fauna and flora, with vast forests of broadleaf and fir, hills and fast flowing rivers. Visitors can wander through the many picturesque villages nestling in the valleys where traditions and folklore still live on, and where the region's arts and crafts can be enjoyed.

Springtime in the Ardennes is the season for walking, cycling, fishing, canoeing and kayaking. Horse riding, climbing and mountain biking are other examples of popular sports in the Ardennes. The keen mountaineer has an exciting choice of challenges. During wintertime, the Ardennes are a fun place for cross-country skiing, sledging or snow scooter racing. There is action, even underground. Some of the caves are certainly worth a visit.

Amongst the greenery lie the silent witnesses of the past of the Ardennes, such as castles, forts and citadels. They come to life again during re-enactment events and displays where knights and their shield bearers turn the neighbourhood into a battlefield.

• Cities of Art:

Belgium has a remarkable number of cities of art: Bruges, Brussels, Antwerp, Bergen, Liege, Ghent, Namur... Each of these cities have a lot in store for you, and is worth a city trip. If you like the idea of being face to face with the paintings of Rubens, Ensor or Van Eyck; the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp is your place. You can also go straight to the Rubens House Museum. Alternatively, a visit to the house of the Art Nouveau architect Victor Horta, in Brussels, also has its appeal. Perhaps you simply prefer to stroll through the picturesque little streets of Brussels, Bruges or Ghent.



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Actually, all Belgian cities of art in Belgium will offer you a pleasant and interesting stay. What is more, this not only applies to museums and monuments. After a visit to the museum, the enjoyment of a delicious meal with a glass of wine or Belgian beer in one of the many restaurants or brasseries is a must. When in Antwerp, you can take a trip in a horse-drawn carriage through the old city centre. In Bruges, a boat trip along the canals will undoubtedly go down well. In the evening, you will then be ready for a dazzling cultural program or for a night out in the convivial surroundings of our pubs.

Belgian gastronomy

Belgians are "bon vivants". They like to eat and drink and Belgian cuisine is far more than the traditional mussels and fries. The range of Belgian flavours is broad and varied, from sweets to savouries.

In the morning, you can start your day with a delicious slice of *cramique* (raisin bread) or *craquelin* (sweet bread). For those who love tradition, there is also the so-called "Greek bread", which isn't in the least bit Greek but a 100% Brussels specialty!

Later in the day, a Belgian person will of course want to start the aperitif with a good beer. Whether it is lager or dark, or perhaps amber, white or fruity, beer reigns supreme in Belgium. Particularly if you taste one of the six Trappist beers, brewed in an abbey where monks carry out or oversee the production process.

As a starter, Flemish-style asparagus is much appreciated: who can resist the delicious combination of asparagus covered in melted butter, minced hard-boiled eggs, parsley and lemon? If you are at the seaside, you should try shrimp croquettes or tomatoes stuffed with shrimps. In the south of the country, you can enjoy a Liège-style salad with beans, bacon and potatoes or rabbit sauce meatballs, with Liège syrup and brown sugar.

In Brussels, you have more than just cabbage. People like whelks, sea snails eaten at food stalls, or *stoemp*, a dish of mashed potatoes with vegetables.



Bruges

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Traditional Belgian dishes are hearty: rabbit cooked in Gueuze, Flemish beef stew, waterzooi with chicken or fish, stewed eel in a green herb sauce, a meat roulade dish called "headless birds", *chicons au gratin*, "américain" with fries... There are many delicious dishes, some with strange names, to discover and savour.

Afterwards, you can taste one of many Belgian cheeses; you will be surprised by their quality and diversity. To finish off, a good waffle from Liège or Brussels. Waffles from Liège contain lovely, crunchy pearl sugar. Those from Brussels are fluffier and rectangular. Some Belgian pralines, *cuberçons*, *speculoos* or *babelettes* could also tempt you... In all cases, our award-winning whiskey or numerous jenever will help digestion!

Economy

Belgium's strongly globalised economy and its transport infrastructure are integrated in the rest of Europe. Its location at the heart of a highly industrialised region helped Belgium to rank in the top 20 of the largest trading nations. The economy is characterised by a highly productive work force, high GNP and high exports per capita. Belgium's main imports are raw materials, machinery and equipment, chemicals, raw diamonds, pharmaceuticals, food, transportation equipment, and oil products. Its main exports are machinery and equipment, chemicals, finished diamonds, metals and metal products, and foodstuffs. The Belgian economy is also heavily service-oriented.

As one of the founding members of the European Union, Belgium strongly supports an open economy and the extension of the powers of EU institutions to integrate member economies. Since 1922, through the Belgium-Luxembourg Economic Union, Belgium and Luxembourg have become a single trade market with customs and currency union.

Belgium was the first continental European country to undergo the Industrial Revolution, in the early 19th century. Liège and Charleroi rapidly developed mining and steelmaking, which flourished until the mid-20th century in the Sambre and Meuse valley and made Belgium among one of the three most industrialized nations in the world from 1830 to 1910. However, by the 1840s, the textile industry of Flanders was in severe crisis, and the region experienced famine from 1846 to 1850.

After World War II, Ghent and Antwerp experienced a rapid expansion of the chemical and petroleum industries. The 1973 and 1979 oil crises sent the economy into a recession; it was particularly prolonged in Wallonia, where the steel industry had become less competitive and experienced serious decline. In the 1980s and 1990s, the economic centre of the country continued to shift northwards and is now concentrated in the populous Flemish Diamond area.





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From 1832 until 2002, Belgium's currency was the Belgian franc. Belgium switched to the euro in 2002, with the first sets of euro coins being minted in 1999. The standard Belgian euro coins designated for circulation show the portrait of the monarch (first King Albert II, since 2013 King Philippe).

Despite an 18% decrease observed from 1970 to 1999, Belgium still had the highest rail network density within the European Union in 1999 with 113.8 km for 1 000 km². On the other hand, during the same period, 1970–1999, the motorway network has seen a huge growth (+56%). In 1999, the density of km motorways per 1000 km² and 1000 inhabitants amounted to 55.1 and 16.5 respectively and were significantly superior to the EU's of 13.7 and 15.9.

Belgium experiences some of the most congested traffic in Europe. In 2010, commuters to the cities of Brussels and Antwerp spent respectively 65 and 64 hours a year in traffic jams. Like in most small European countries, more than 80% of the airways traffic is handled by a single airport, Brussels Airport. The ports of Antwerp and Zeebrugge (Bruges) share more than 80% of Belgian maritime traffic, Antwerp being the second European harbour with a gross weight of goods handled of 115 988 000 t in 2000 after a growth of 10.9% over the preceding five years. In 2016, the port of Antwerp handled 214 million tons after a year-on-year growth of 2.7 %.

At present, there is an economic gap between Flanders and Wallonia. Wallonia was historically wealthy compared to Flanders, mostly due to its heavy industries, but the decline of the steel industry post-World War II led to the region's decline, whereas Flanders economy rose. Since then, Flanders is among the wealthiest regions in Europe. This division affects mutual perception in addition to the already-existing language division.

Science

Contribution to the development of science and technology has appeared throughout the country's history. The 16th century Early Modern flourishing of Western Europe included cartographer Gerardus Mercator, anatomist Andreas Vesalius, herbalist Rembert Dodoens and mathematician Simon Stevin among the most influential scientists.

Chemist Ernest Solvay and engineer Zenobe Gramme (École industrielle de Liège) gave their names to the Solvay process and the Gramme dynamo, respectively, in the 1860s. Bakelite was developed in 1907–1909 by Leo Baekeland. Ernest Solvay also acted as a major philanthropist and gave its name to the Solvay Institute of Sociology, the Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management and the International Solvay Institutes for Physics and Chemistry, which are now, part of the Université libre de Bruxelles. In 1911, he started a series of conferences, the Solvay Conferences on Physics and Chemistry, which have had a deep impact on the evolution of quantum physics and chemistry. A major contribution to fundamental science was also due to a Belgian, Monsignor Georges Lemaître (Catholic University of Louvain), who is credited with proposing the Big Bang theory of the origin of the universe in 1927.

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Three Nobel Prizes in Physiology or Medicine were awarded to Belgians: Jules Bordet (Université libre de Bruxelles) in 1919, Corneille Heymans (University of Ghent) in 1938 and Albert Claude (Université libre de Bruxelles) together with Christian de Duve (Université catholique de Louvain) in 1974. François Englert (Université libre de Bruxelles) was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 2013. Ilya Prigogine (Université libre de Bruxelles) was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1977. Two Belgian mathematicians have been awarded the Fields Medal: Pierre Deligne in 1978 and Jean Bourgain in 1994.

Cost of living

The table underneath provides you with an example of common product prices in Belgium.

• Current as of May 2021

Item	Price in euro
Food	
1 kg (2 lb.) of potatoes	€1.39
1 kg (2 lb.) of apples	€2.29
12 eggs, large	€3.92
1 liter (1 qt.) of whole fat milk	€0.94
1 kg (2 lb.) of tomatoes	€1.91
0.5 l (16 oz) domestic beer in the supermarket	€1.97
Transportation	
Monthly ticket public transport	€50
Taxi trip on a business day, basic tariff, 8 km. (5 miles)	€21
Personal care	
Tube of toothpaste	€2.29
4 rolls of toilet paper	€1.70
Deodorant, roll-on (50ml ~ 1.5 oz.)	€3.70
Hair shampoo 2-in-1 (400 ml ~ 12 oz.)	€3.80
Entertainment	
2 tickets to the movies	€21
Basic dinner out for two in neighbourhood pub	€49

→ Please visit the website of Expatistan to see more products: <https://www.expatisitan.com/cost-of-living/brussels>

→ Please also visit Numbeo website, which allows you to compare the costs of Brussels with your home city and country: <https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/in/Brussels>



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The Capital: Brussels

(Ref.: Belgian Foreign Affairs website, Belgian Tourist Office website and Wikipedia website)

Brussels, officially the Brussels-Capital Region is a region of Belgium comprising 19 municipalities, including the City of Brussels, which is the capital of Belgium. The Brussels-Capital Region is located in the central portion of the country and is part of both the French Community of Belgium and the Flemish Community, but is separate from the Flemish Region (in which it forms an enclave) and the Walloon Region. Brussels is the most densely populated and the richest region in Belgium in terms of GDP per capita. It covers 161 km², a relatively small area compared to the two other regions, and has an internal population of 1.214.550 million people.

Brussels grew from a small rural settlement on the river Senne to become an important city-region in Europe. Since the end of the Second World War, it has been a major centre for international politics and the home of numerous international organisations, politicians, diplomats and civil servants. Brussels is the capital of the European Union and hosts a number of principal EU institutions, including its administrative-legislative, executive-political, and legislative branches (though the judicial branch is located in Luxembourg, and the European Parliament meets for a minority of the year in Strasbourg) and its name is sometimes used metonymically to describe the EU and its institutions. The secretariat of the Benelux and headquarters of NATO are also located in Brussels. As the economic capital of Belgium and one of the top financial centres of Western Europe with Euronext Brussels, it is classified as an Alpha global city. Brussels is a hub for rail, road and air traffic, sometimes earning the nickname "Crossroads of Europe". The Brussels Metro is the only rapid transit system in Belgium. In addition, both its airport and railway stations are the largest and busiest in the country.

Historically Dutch-speaking, Brussels saw a language shift to French from the late 19th century. The Brussels-Capital Region is officially bilingual in French and Dutch, even though French is now the de



Brussels

▪ General information about Belgium

facto main language with over 90% of the population speaking it. Brussels is also increasingly becoming multilingual. English is spoken as a second language by nearly a third of the population and a large number of expatriates speak other languages.

Brussels is known for its cuisine and gastronomy, as well as its historical and architectural landmarks; some of them are registered as UNESCO World Heritage sites. Main attractions include its historic Grand Place, Manneken Pis, Atomium, and cultural institutions such as La Monnaie and the Museums of Art and History. Because of its long tradition of Belgian comics, Brussels is also hailed as a capital of the comic strip.



• Studying at the Royal Military Academy

Your contacts at the RMA

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• Studying at the Royal Military Academy

General information about the Royal Military Academy

The Royal Military Academy (RMA) is a military institution providing university level education and is responsible for the basic academic, military and physical training of future officers. The education and training is tailored to the needs of the Belgian Defence (Army, Air Force, Navy and Medical Service) and integrates the values of our society. The RMA is also in charge of the advanced training of officers throughout their career in the Belgian Defence Forces.

• An Officer's profession

The main task of the RMA is to educate and train officers who will be able to perform efficiently in diverse, complex and extraordinary circumstances. An officer must be able to lead men and women, and is embedded in local, national or international structures. In order to carry out its tasks and to execute its missions, an officer is assigned material means and, more importantly, human means. An officer must be able to evaluate complex situations correctly, to take appropriate decisions to reach given objectives, to exert authority by giving appropriate orders, to pay attention to his personnel and their surroundings, and to command respect by his attitude and his actions.

Embodying all those qualities and skills by nature is a rare occurrence. That is the reason why education at the RMA focuses as much on academic knowledge as physical, mental and character development. This all-round education aims at forging the military leaders needed by our armed forces. The RMA takes pride in the development of our cadets in order to prepare them to lead in tough conditions, sometimes straight after graduation.

• A constantly evolving profession

It would be wrong to assume basic training as sufficient to build a complete career. To ensure the most current and accurate information and to keep in touch with the rapid developments of present-day society, executives need to continuously update their knowledge and extend their competencies. This is equally true for Defence; and this is the reason the Royal Military Academy offers advanced and professional courses, enabling officers to carry out staff functions efficiently and to take command in national and international contexts.

The RMA also offers the structures and organises advanced third-cycle courses allowing students to acquire a PhD or an additional master degree.

Finally, when needed in one's career and assignments, the RMA offers training in specific domains as public tender offers and law of armed conflict.

Many courses and training sessions are not exclusively aimed at military and civilian Defence personnel, but are also open to civilians from private and public sectors.

History of the Academy

• More than 175 years in Service of the Nation

In 2009, the Royal Military Academy celebrated its 175th anniversary. Not long after the independence of Belgium in 1830, King Leopold I got convinced of the need for a professional corps of officers. The young



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King himself had served as an officer in the Russian Army and fought against the Napoleonic armies. There was still much tension between Belgium and the Netherlands. Although there was a ceasefire, no peace treaty was signed yet. The necessity for well-educated officers imposed itself. King Leopold I had great admiration for the French "Ecole Polytechnique". In 1834, Lieutenant-Colonel Jean-Jacques Edouard Chapelié, a former student of the Ecole Polytechnique, was assigned with the mission of establishing a school for the education of Belgian officers. He became the first commander of the Military Academy.

The Royal Military Academy was founded in 1834 to train prospective executives of the fledgling Belgian Army and especially officer-engineers for the artillery and the engineering corps. The command of the academy was entrusted to the French Lieutenant-Colonel Chapelié, whose mission was to base the training and structures of the Academy on the model of the French "Grandes Ecoles" and more in particular that of the famous "Ecole Polytechnique".

Since its establishment, the RMA has constantly evolved in order to adapt training to the needs of the Armed Forces and to maintain the university level education in accordance with the granted degrees.

- **The campus: one hundred years old and still modern**

After its foundation, the RMA was first housed in a building in the Rue de Namur, just behind the Royal Palace in Brussels. The difficult early days of the Academy at the Porte de Namur begin with the French generals Chapelié and Nerenburger and with the first Belgian academy-commander Liagre. An Academy for "Special Weapons": Artillery and Engineers and later on for so-called "Ordinary Weapons": Infantry and Cavalry. Eminent professors teach at the Academy: Adolphe Quetelet, Jean-Servais Stas, Jean-Baptiste Madou and even Charles De Coster (Till Eulenspiegel).

Soon this building became too small, and in 1874, the RMA moved to the La Cambre Abbey, where it kept on growing. The Academy was temporarily housed in a former abbey at the Cambre Woods. Dozens of drawings of the cadets show us their daily lives in the sleeping quarters and dining halls, in class and study, but also the "Infection", the duels, the containment under disciplinary action, the abundant Pampou meals, the "accidents" in the duck pond...

The royal princes Baudouin and Albert were prepared in our Academy for their future tasks. Scientific



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and didactic tools and courses prove that the Academy closely followed the latest inventions (electricity, telegraph, telephone...). Twenty countries entrust us the education of their officers, while our alumni distinguish themselves abroad: 300 of them in the Congo, others in Thailand, two of them escorted Baron de Gerlache during his explorations of Antarctica.

For the third time in its 75-year of existence, the RMA had to search for new accommodation. The location was found in a quiet, green area of the capital, along the Cinquantenaire Park and its exhibition halls. King Leopold II then returns the Academy to Brussels and constructs prestigious buildings on a campus that stretches over 5 ha. Later on, important institutions would be established in the same neighbourhood, which would turn Brussels into the Capital of Europe.

The new buildings were inaugurated in 1909, and met the requirements of the age, both as regards to the functionality of a higher education institution and an architectural design in harmony with its expanding neighbourhood. General Lemans demands the highest quality from the students, but also from the professors. The barbaric German invasion of August 1914 abruptly ends the Belle Epoque dream: the Germans occupy our Academy and leave it in ruins. Three hundred students and alumni are killed in the terrible trench war.

By appointing a former promotion colleague as Academy Commandant and by letting his children Leopold and Charles (the later King and Prince Regent) study in the RMA, King Albert I shows his determination to get our Academy back on its feet. The Academy gets its own flag, a coat of arms and motto, and from 1936, we may call ourselves "royal". The regained high level of our training brings visitors from all around the world. New uniforms and new traditions are introduced: like the Sword of the King and the RMA annual ball.

Students and alumni distinguish themselves during the Eighteen-Day Campaign, the escapes from the prison camps, fighting with Allied troops and especially in the Resistance and the Secret Army. Despite the atrocities of the Gestapo and the hell of the concentration camps, they keep burning the light of hope.

Against the Anglo-Saxon pressure, and with the support of the professors E. Franckx and P. Cauchie, General Beernaerts can enforce his vision: the post-war RMA will provide both an academic and a practical military training. Besides a number, the promotions now get a name. Earlier traditions are revived: the Sword of the King, the annual ball, the Pampou. From 1978, female students make their entrance. Richly illustrated promotion books, student leaflets and stickers show not only the new technical possibilities, but also the assertiveness of the new generations. Rapid scientific developments relating to nuclear physics, photogrammetry, ballistics, chemistry, computer science, mechanics, telecommunications, and others, force our chairs into a continuous adaptation of programmes and courses. In 1984, the RMA celebrates its 150th anniversary.

As a result of societal developments and the evolution of the Academy into a university-level institution, either a new move or a thorough renovation became unavoidable. The latter option was chosen, so that today you are welcomed on a campus that, even though it is a hundred years old, is completely renovated and modernised.

Despite pressure from the European Union, our out-dated infrastructure is renovated in situ, expanded and adapted to the increased number of students (see our photo shoot on the RMA infrastructure). The royal princes Philippe, Laurent and Amadeo got their education in the RMA. In this post-Cold War era foreign delegations from around the world visit our Academy, while foreign students and trainees from around 20 countries follow our courses.



- Studying at the Royal Military Academy

Student life at the Royal Military Academy

The Erasmus Program allows students to evolve in an international environment and to develop an international mindset by providing the possibility to integrate another institution and to discover other cultures and traditions. Therefore, at the Royal Military Academy (RMA) you will be plunged in a bath of traditions that find their origins in the institution's history. One of these traditions is the "Pampou", a traditional song known by every student at the RMA and which is performed with conviction during major events. In this song, the students complain about the strict diet and work required from them. But "Pampou" is also the name of a flyer distributed internally, in which students express their opinions and share their personal experiences, thereby serving as an escape channel for the students.

During your stay, in addition to the academic training, you will also have the opportunity to share the daily life of the RMA students, which is punctuated by sports sessions such as cross-country, swimming, triathlon, soccer, and many other activities, but also to take part in the preparation of numerous competitions within and outside of the RMA. Internally at the RMA, a competition involving several disciplines is also organized yearly, the Inter-Promotion, between the different promotions. Each year, the promotion that wins this competition receives the "Inter-Promotions Cup".

Regarding the military instruction offered at the RMA, the school works in cooperation with the EU and NATO member states. You will also have the opportunity to take part in the military ceremony that takes place every year at the end of September, during which the students who have successfully completed their military initiation phase receive their blue beret. This is also the time when the "golden boot" is awarded to the student who has achieved the best results in the military initiation phase.

A few days after this ceremony, takes place every year, the official opening of the academic year. The Commandant and Rector of the RMA officially declares the academic year open during a military ceremony that takes place nearby Parc du Cinquantenaire. The highest military authorities are invited to attend this ceremony, during which the RMA has the honour to welcome members of the Royal Family, as well as the Minister of Defense. This event, attended by more than 1000 spectators each year, arouses curiosity and is always a great success.

Traditionally, the new promotions of the Basic Education, who have just completed the military initiation phase, and the trainees of the Defense College are welcomed in the school during this parade.

Later in the evening, the King's Sword, a prestigious award, is given by a representative of His Majesty the King, and in some years personally by the King himself, to a student who has achieved the highest results in all aspects of his or her Bachelor's degree.

Then, each year at the end of September - early October, the students organize the traditional "Parade des Flambeaux", a ceremony during which the RMA alumni are invited, and during which second year students, called "dear alumni", symbolically hand over the "flambeau" to their first year godson(s). After this short ceremony, the students and alumni attend a reception where they can meet the new promotions.

The School's motto, adopted in 1935, is a constant reminder for all students and Alumni of the purpose of the training "Rege duce pro jure et honore" which means that "Under the guidance of the King, [I fight] for the right and the honour."



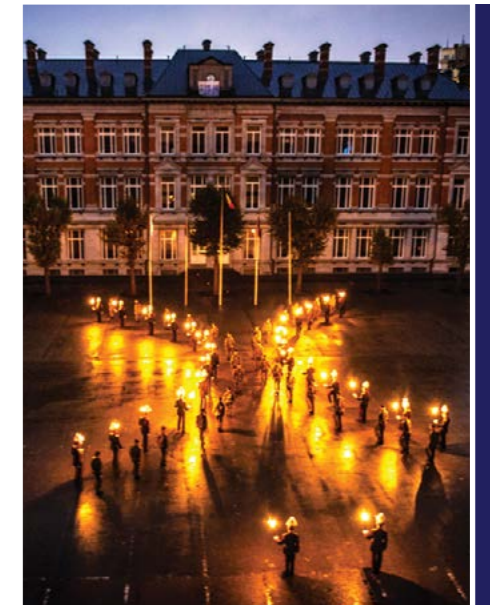
- Studying at the Royal Military Academy

You will also be able to attend the swearing of the oath of the fourth year students who, officially on September 26, take the oath of office, "I swear fidelity to the King, obedience to the constitution and the laws of the Belgian people". This military ceremony is very emotional because not only does it represent the commissioning to the rank of Second Lieutenant or Ensign 2nd Class, but also because the families of the students are present.

Later in the year, you will have the opportunity to participate in the "international" week around March or April, which will end with the RMA annual gala ball. You will have the opportunity to dance a few steps of the traditional "Quadrille des Lanciers" and to sing the "Pampou".

For those who feel the soul of an artist, you will find your happiness in one of the four music groups that make up the "Music Band" which are the Pop Band, Fanfare, Drum Corps and DJ-team.

Finally, at the end of your training at the RMA, you will receive, like the Belgian students and trainees, your diploma, patent or certificate during an academic and/or military ceremony under the admiring eyes of your families





Studying at the Royal Military Academy

Practical informations:

Accommodation and meal:


Foreign students and trainees will be fully integrated in a promotion and will share the daily life of our cadets and trainees. They will be freely accommodated on the campus of the Royal Military Academy.

Meals can be purchased at the dining facilities of the RMA under the same conditions of our cadets; they receive a card that will grant them a discount on the meal on the campus. Furthermore, during spare time plenty of dining possibilities are offered outside of the campus.

Campus facilities:

Education and training at the RMA is supported by our Campus infrastructure: Classrooms, auditoria, lecture halls and laboratories; Training and sports facilities: sports hall, gym, dojo, swimming pool, climbing wall and bouldering room, spinning room, squash courts, fencing room, obstacle course; Accommodation building: individual and two-persons rooms; Services: library, hairdresser, dry cleaning, dining facility, cafeteria; International room for foreign students and trainees.

Sport:

For more information please call the following number:  +32 2 441 41 59



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Grading system

Students at the RMA are graded according to the table underneath and the following rules:

Course unit code (1)	Title of course unit	Duration of course unit (2)	Local grade (3)	Local grade (4)	Local grade (5)
Example					
CS962	Strategic studies	15	14	B	6

Course unit code:

Refer to the ECTS information package

Duration of course unit:

Y	=	1 full academic year
1S	=	1 semester
1T	=	term/trimester
2S	=	2 semesters
2T	=	2 terms / trimest

Description of the institutional grading system:

Individual grades are reported to the students on a scale ranging from 0 to 20. ECTS credits for a given course are awarded if a student gets a grade of 10 out of 20 (or higher). For students who pass the examinations, the grades have the following meaning: 10 or 11: pass; 12 or 13: satisfactory; 14 or 15: good; 16 or 17: very good; and 18 or more: excellent.

ECTS grading scale:

ECTS grade	% of successful students normally achieving the grade	Definition
A	10	EXCELLENT – outstanding performance with only minor errors
B	25	VERY GOOD – above the average standard but with some 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 required before the credit can be awarded
F	-	FAIL – considerable further work is required

ECTS credits:

1 full academic year	=	60 credits
1 semester	=	30 credits
1 term / trimester	=	20 credits

▀ Studying at the Royal Military Academy

Getting to Brussels and the RMA:

Address

Postal address of Campus Renaissance:

Avenue Renaissance 30
1000 Brussels

Entry of Campus Renaissance:

Rue Hobbema 8
1000 Brussels

Guardhouse phone



+ 32(0)2 4413867

Nearby subway stations

Two subway stations at approximately 10 to 15 minutes walking distance from the RMA: Schuman and Merode.

Parking

Please take into account the difficulty of parking in the neighbourhood of the RMA and the number of limited parking spaces within the RMA. We would like to encourage you to join the RMA by public transport.

Location

The RMA is situated next to the Parc du Cinquantenaire and close to the European Institutions (place Schuman).

More informations about the city of Brussels, public transport or hotels ?

Please visit the following websites:

<https://visit.brussels/en>
<https://be.brussels/>
<https://www.brusselslife.be/en>
<https://inforjeunesbruxelles.be/>
<https://www.stib-mivb.be/?l=en>
<https://www.belgiantrain.be/en>
<https://www.hotelscombined.be/>



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