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Questions and answers regarding Covid-19 for future candidate-students

Are you planning to study at Thomas More University of Applied Sciences?

Although COVID-19 has shut down our on-site campuses, we are still here for you digitally. We care deeply about the future of our international students, and we understand that you might have questions about how the COVID19 pandemic might affect your plans to study at Thomas More.

We have compiled a list of the most frequently asked questions and their answers. This list will be updated regularly.

Is Thomas More still open?

The Belgian government decided to close all campuses on Thursday 12th of March. All on-site lessons and activities have been suspended, and students are not allowed on campus.

However, lessons/lectures are now being provided through online streaming and other e-learning methods. Our staff have been working from home and are doing their best to facilitate our students' learning experience in the most efficient way possible.

How is Thomas More handling this situation?

At the start of the spread of the virus, Thomas More put together a coordination team. This team closely monitors the situation and examines what measures the university of applied sciences should or should not take. In doing so, the team relies on the guidelines of the World Health Organisation, the Belgian government and the experts in the field.

The team consists of policy officers and staff from the Safety, Health and Environment Department, the Personnel Department, Student Affairs and the Communication Department. Experts from our association partner KU Leuven provide daily advice. If necessary, the team consults with experts from the International Office department.

How does Thomas More ensure that staff and students are sufficiently informed?

We inform the Thomas More community through our website, which is updated regularly, and by email when necessary. Staff and students can also contact us at coronavirus@thomasmore.be with their questions and concerns. The coordination team monitors this mailbox on a daily basis.

For the most up-to-date information, please see check our [website](#).

Can I attend a Thomas More Open Campus Day?

We will still open up our campus, but in a different way. You can discover everything Thomas More has to offer by attending our online Open Campus Day

If you can't make it to our Open Campus Day, you can also join one of our weekly live webinars.

Find the dates and times for both the Open Campus Day and the weekly webinars on our website.

Will courses at Thomas More start in September 2020?

As of 21 April 2020, our intention is to start the semester in September 2020 as planned. This decision is pending the approval of the Belgian government.

If you won't be able to get to Belgium in time for the start date in September, then please contact admissions.

Application

My education institution is closed, or was closed temporarily, due to COVID19. My exams and/or graduation date will therefore be postponed. What are my options?

If your school has closed and your graduation has been postponed, you can send us your transcript of records for the last 3 years of study (and a provisional diploma, if possible). We will evaluate these documents and might be able to grant conditional admission if the documents are approved. Once you receive your official diploma, your conditional admission will be upgraded to an official admission.

The Belgian Government and the higher education institutions are still discussing other solutions as well. We will inform you as soon as we receive more information.

I am unable to take an English proficiency test because test centres in my home country are closed. What should I do?

TOEFL offers a TOEFL iBT Special Home Edition test. This is an online test available everywhere except mainland China and Iran. IELTS also offers an online test. Both of these options are acceptable for admission to Thomas More.

The Belgian Government and the higher education institutions are also still discussing other alternative solutions. We will inform you as soon as we receive more information.

My grades are probably going to be affected by missing courses and/or online learning. Does this have impact on my application?

Thomas More does not assess your grades. We base our admission on your final diploma or school leaving certificate. Please note that candidates with a diploma obtained in a non-EEA member state may have to meet additional requirements. If this is the case, our admission services will contact you.

Can I postpone my application to the next semester (February 2021)?

This is possible for a few of our English programmes. If you wish to do this, please contact our admission department. They will check whether or not this is possible.

Is the Admission Office at Thomas More still open despite the current closure of its campuses?

Yes! The admission office is open from Monday till Wednesday. Our admission officers are assessing applications as usual.

NOTE: The admission office will be closed during the Easter Holidays from the 13th – 17th of April.

Payment

I have received an offer from Thomas More and I need to make a payment. What are the options for a refund in case I can't start my studies (due to unforeseen circumstances) in September 2020?

We know you might feel a little unsure about joining us in September. We offer full refunds for the first semester tuition fee (for non-EEA students). If you have chosen the Blocked Account procedure, this will also be refunded (minus 100€ administrative fee). Please contact our admission office if you wish to receive a refund.

When is the deadline to make the payment of the tuition fee and/or blocked account to Thomas More to confirm my offer?

We do not maintain a specific payment deadline. However, we recommend to pay before the 1st of July in order for you to be able to obtain your student visa on time.

For now, we have not received any information from the government regarding student visas. Most Embassies and Visa Centers are closed and are not accepting any applications. We do not know how long this situation will last, but we will keep you informed.

Can I have an extension to pay my tuition fees and (when applicable) deposit?

We fully understand that this is a difficult time and that you may need additional time to make your payment arrangements. If this is the case, please contact our admissions office to discuss your case, and we'll see what we can do for you.

Visa & Travel

Are there any restrictions for international students (by the Belgian government) travelling into Belgium for the purpose of studying?

Travel to Belgium for studies has been recognized as essential travel by both the EU and the Belgian government.

Students coming from non-EU countries outside the Schengen Area (except the UK)

If you will **travel to Belgium from a non-EU country outside the Schengen Area** to start your studies in September, you will need to fill out [this form](#) before departing for Belgium. You may also need to provide a **copy of your Thomas More registration certificate** at the airport in order to leave your country and/or enter Belgium. Please **print both documents in advance** and keep them with you at all times during your travels.

As of 8 July 2020, you will also be required to **quarantine for 14 days upon your arrival** in the country. Before you depart for Belgium, **be prepared to provide the address of the place you will stay during quarantine**. You will be responsible for securing a place to stay, whether it's a hotel, a friend's home or your student residence.

You should regularly check the [Belgian government's official website](#) in case the situation changes in the coming months.

For general information about travelling to Europe, keep an eye on the [European Commission website](#).

If anything is unclear, the best thing you can do is reach out to the Belgian embassy or consulate in your home country. They will always have the most recent information relevant to your specific country of origin.

Students coming from the EU, Schengen Area countries or the United Kingdom

There are currently no restrictions on travel to Belgium from these countries, but you should regularly check the [Belgian government's official website](#) in case the situation changes in the coming months.

For general information about travelling to Europe, keep an eye on the [European Commission website](#).

What is the best way to travel to Belgium at the moment?

The number of flights arriving in Brussels has been greatly reduced due to COVID-19 restrictions. If you are having trouble finding a flight directly to Belgium, it might be a better option to fly into Amsterdam Schiphol Airport and then travel to Belgium by train.

Please be aware that, as of May 2020, you will be stopped at the border upon entering Belgium and asked to provide evidence that your travel to Belgium was necessary. This may include documents such as your admission letter and student visa, but it is best to first contact the Belgian embassy or consulate in your home country to ask their advice.