

Welcome to the International Master of
Science in Rural Development - IMRD
The MSc programme that opens the doors
to top universities in the field of Rural
Development teaching and research.
Our goal is to make your participation in
IMRD academically worthwhile and
rewarding, culturally enriching and
enjoyable.

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IMRD

IMRD+

Student Handbook

2021-2022

imrd@ugent.be

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International Master of Science in Rural Development

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A lot of questions inevitably arise when starting a new academic programme, in a new country, at a new academic institute. The purpose of this Handbook is to support you by providing information on several academic and practical aspects regarding the IMRD programme.

This Handbook focuses on general IMRD issues and includes/explains rules, guidelines and procedures for the programme as a whole. It also points out where to look for further information.

The Handbook does never replace any existing institutional specific Handbooks and should therefore be read in conjunction with the official Codes of Education and Examination, local Rules and Regulations, Codes of Practice and departmental written policies in each of the individual institutes attended by the student.

The Handbook is complemented by information on the IMRD website (<https://imrd.eu/>) and the [IMRD UFORA infosite](https://ufora.ugent.be/d2l/le/discovery/view/course/78019) (<https://ufora.ugent.be/d2l/le/discovery/view/course/78019>).

The content of this Handbook is updated every academic year, so please make sure to consult the latest version.



Figure 1: Location of the different IMRD partner Universities

1. Introduction

A biobased economy is gaining importance and impacts the whole world. All kinds of policies should adopt this change. The agribusiness complex is very important in this economy and hence faces many challenges. Over 50% of the world's population lives in rural areas, areas with multifunctional activities (production, environmental protection, landscape and recreation), leading to many interactions between rural and urban centres regarding food and non-food applications. Market liberalization causes a shift to service oriented support and policies, requiring specialists to manage these changes.

Specialists therefore have excellent knowledge of international rural policies, models for rural development, agricultural economic theories and the like. The need for specialists with this expertise is acknowledged by many stakeholders. Hence students should acquire specific and integrated skills during training, involving different settings in an international context. IMRD responds to this need.

The International Master of Science in Rural Development (IMRD) is unique since it emphasizes comparative study in an international context. IMRD is a programme offered by universities and research institutes from EU and non-EU countries for training specialists from the EU, as well as from developed, developing and transition countries. This network of institutes has the expertise and experience to meet the demand from several stakeholders for highly skilled specialists.

The proposed Master programme has several distinct specificities: multi-disciplinary approach, comparative study of EU and non-EU models, flexible study programme and the mobility requirements.

2. Partner Institutions

IMRD partner Universities	Abbreviation	Expertise
AGROCAMPUS Ovest	AO	Rural Development: Production Systems and Sustainable Development, Participative Management of Rural Areas
Can Tho University	CTU	Rural technology, rural socio-economics, biodiversity conservation, ecotourism, agricultural marketing, farm household economy management, agriculture and applied biology, aquaculture & fisheries, environment & natural resources
Escuela Superior Politecnica del Litoral	ESPOL	Agricultural and Resource Economics; Biotechnology; Sustainable Tropical Agriculture; Rural Development
Ghent University	UGent	Agricultural Economics and Policy; Food Economics for Developing Countries, sustainable development, natural resources management
Humboldt University Berlin	HUB	Institutional (Agricultural) Economics; Rural Governance of Natural Resources; Institutional Analysis of Rural Change
Korea University	KU	Specialised Courses on Agricultural, Food and Resource Economics, Macroeconomic Analysis, Microeconomic Analysis, Applied Econometrics, Applied Mathematical Programming, Dynamic Economic Analysis
Nanjing Agricultural University	NAU	Resource and Environmental Economics; Land Administration and Land Management; Rural Development
Pisa University	UniPi	Food; Communication and Sustainable Rural Development; Change processes in rural areas
Seoul National University	SNU	Specialised Courses on Agricultural, Food and Resource Economics, Agricultural Marketing, Futures Market Analysis, and Resource/Environmental Economics
Slovak university of Agriculture in Nitra	SUA	Public Administration and Regional Development
University of Agricultural Sciences Bangalore	UAB	Natural resource and Environmental Economics; Economics of sustainable development and Natural Resources; Econometrics Economics of water resources; Integrated Farming systems for Livelihood Security
University of Arkansas	UA	Resource and Environmental Economics; Food and Agricultural Marketing; Agricultural Policy; International Trade Development; Regional Economic Development;
University of Córdoba	UCO	Sustainable Development, Territorial Development, Natural Resource and Environmental Economics, Policies for Rural Areas, Social-Ecological System Approach, Governance
University of Pretoria	UP	Agribusiness Management and Rural Finance; Agricultural extension; Food Policy and Environmental Economics in Rural Areas

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Non-academic partner institutions	Expertise
BOS+ (VLIR track)	NGO providing internship opportunities. Agriculture: sustainable, organic and agro-ecological farming, with particular attention to agroforestry; Water management: more specifically integrated water management at the level of micro and sub-basins; Environment: promoting a development model with an integrated ecosystem focus. Internship destination possibility: Ecuador
TRIAS (VLIR track)	NGO providing internship opportunities. Objectives: Connecting people in member based farmers organisations, entrepreneurial organisations, empowering farmers and entrepreneurs in economic activities. Internship destination possibility: Latin-America, Asia and South-Africa

Vredeseilanden (VLIR track)	NGO providing internship opportunities and possibility for data collection in Vietnam. It is active in 4 continents and oriented to smallholders with focus on the whole food system but few commodities (cocoa, rice, fruits and vegetables, coffee).
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Table 1: IMRD partners

For more detailed information on the different partners please check the [IMRD website](#).

3. The IMRD Consortium

IMRD is a two-year Master programme, jointly organised by several universities worldwide alongside input of international leading institutes in Agricultural Economics and Rural Development. IMRD is supported by the EU programme Erasmus Mundus. All EU partners sign the degree, the non-EU partners do not sign but offer courses or provide guest lectures. The consortium consists of 6 EU and 10 non-EU partners as shown below.

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Continent	Country	IMRD partner Universities	Abbreviation
Africa	South Africa	University of Pretoria	UP
Americas	USA	University of Arkansas	UA
	Ecuador	Escuela Superior Politecnica del Litoral	ESPOL
Asia	China	Nanjing Agricultural University	NAU
	India	University of Agricultural Sciences Bangalore	UAB
	South Korea	Korea University	KU
	South Korea	Seoul National University	SNU
	Vietnam	Can Tho University	CTU
Europe	Belgium	Ghent University	UGent
	France	AGROCAMPUS Ovest	AO
	Germany	Humboldt University Berlin	HUB
	Italy	Pisa University	UniPi
	Slovakia	Slovak university of Agriculture in Nitra	SUA
	Spain	University of Córdoba	UCO

The Consortium has agreements with the University of Arkansas (UA), Korea University (KU), Seoul National University (SNU) and ESPOL enabling students to obtain a second/double degree (IMRD⁺) in respectively the ATLANTIS, EKAFREE and EEURUDEV programmes. The table below indicates which partners are accessible to the students in each of the IMRD mobility tracks.

Programme Track	IMRD		IMRD+		
	Erasmus Mundus	VLIR	ATLANTIS	EKAFREE	EEURUDEV
Final degree(s) obtained*	International MSc in Rural Development		International MSc in Rural Development + MSc in Agricultural Economics (UA)	International MSc in Rural Development + MA in Agricultural Economics (SNU) OR Ma in Economics (KU)	International MSc in Rural Development + MSc in Rural Development (ESPOL)
Mobility possibilities**	UGent, AO, UniPi, SUA, HUB, UCO	UGent, AO, UniPi, SUA, UCO, UP, CTU, ESPOL	UGent, AO, UniPi, SUA, HUB, UCO, UA	UGent, AO, UniPi, SUA, HUB, UCO, KU, SNU	UGent, AO, UniPi, SUA, HUB, UCO, ESPOL
Scholarship availability	Erasmus Mundus Scholarships	VLIR-UOS ICP scholarships	None (Annually students may apply for a bilateral agreement scholarship at UGent for the second year of studies)		

Table 2: IMRD Mobility tracks

*MSc = Master of Science, MA = Master of Arts, Ma = Master.

**See section 2 "Partner Institutions" for the clarification of each acronym.

3.1. Consortium structure

3.1.1. The Management Board (MB)

The administrative and executive body of the Consortium. It is presided by the Course Coordinator and consists of at least one representative of each partner, and 1 non-voting student representative as appointed by the Student Body. The MB meets at least twice a year to discuss and follow-up for taking important overall consortium and (specific) student decisions. Students with special requests, exceptions to (general) rules, etc. should send a motivated request to the MB by sending a scan of the signed request to imrd@ugent.be.

3.1.2. The IMRD Course Coordinator – Central IMRD Secretariat

Ghent University is the coordinating institute of the programme. The IMRD Course Coordinator is Prof.dr.ir. Stijn Speelman (stijn.speelman@ugent.be). The Course Coordinator and the Consortium are supported by the IMRD Secretariat, embedded within the International Training Centre of the Faculty of Bioscience Engineering, UGent. The secretariat is charged with the overall administration, registration, application, general intake, orientation and guidance of all IMRD students. The technical IMRD coordinator is in charge of the IMRD secretariat (imrd@ugent.be, Larre Lafort).

3.1.3. The Local IMRD Coordinators – Local IMRD Secretariat

Each partner has a Local Coordinator/IMRD Secretariat (*Contact details on IMRD website or via the IMRD technical coordinator imrd@ugent.be*). They organise the intake of IMRD students and orient them concerning visa, accommodation, academic matters and the like.

4. Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes of the programme can be consulted in the online Course Catalogue:

<https://studiegids.ugent.be/2020/EN/FACULTY/I/MABA/IMRDVC/IMRDVC.html>. Which can also be accessed through the [IMRD website](#).

5. Course Structure

Students may obtain the IMRD degree through one of **5 mobility tracks** (see table on page 6)

IMRD

- Erasmus Mundus: the standard IMRD track focusing on an EU and international view of rural development
- VLIR: with a focus on poor and transition regions (only for [VLIR scholarship holders](#))

IMRD+

(IMRD+ is the umbrella for all the double degree programmes managed by the IMRD consortium)

- ATLANTIS: combining EU and USA perspectives to create a holistic view on agricultural economics and rural development
- EKAFREE: combining EU and South Korean perspectives with a strong focus on economics and agricultural economics
- ESPOL: combining EU and Latin American perspectives on agricultural policies and economics and rural development.

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Each year, the programme starts early September at Ghent University (Belgium) with the obligatory preparatory course “BePreP”, and ends with a graduation ceremony 2 years later, mid-September.

After the initial obligatory preparatory course (for which no credits are assigned), the programme consists of 5 Modules (4 obligatory modules + ELECTIVE internship):

- **General entrance Module:** Has to be taken at Ghent University (obligatory and optional courses) and is a study period with theoretical formation in basic agricultural economics and development theories and methodologies. Its courses represent a general training into the basic competence domains.
- **Advanced Modules I and II:** allows to specialise in one of the competence domains and consists of a range of obligatory and optional courses, which can be complemented with elective courses for broadening specific knowledge or to improve language/cultural knowledge and skills. Mobility to France or Ecuador to take these modules requires specific language skills (see also the table on page 5). Location is free of choice.
- **The Case Study:** Objective is to undertake a practical experience in a commonly organised study where students with different backgrounds are confronted with the reality of rural development through a more active learning method to share visions and discuss opinions. Basic knowledge and assessment methods are applied. Students need to work in groups and are confronted with rural work realities, have field visits and work meetings with local stakeholders. Location is free of choice.
- **Master Dissertation/Thesis:** An original dissertation or thesis is based on own scientific and practical research with guidance of a supervisor and is written in 1 of the disciplines of rural development economics or policies. Students specialise in one of the disciplines offered, and demonstrate their ability to individually analyse rural development or food problems in a scientific correct way. *Guidelines can be found on the IMRD info site on UFORA.*
- **Internship:** is elective, *guidelines can be found on IMRD UFORA infosite.*

Period	Module name	Courses	ECTS
Summer, before the start of the academic year		BEPrep Kick-off event	0
Semester 1 (Sep- Feb)	General Entrance Module	Mandatory basic skills package	20
		Elective Specialisation courses	0-10
		Optional transferable skills courses	0-5
Semester 2 (Feb-June)	Advanced Module I	Mandatory specialisation package	15
		Elective Specialisation courses	0-10
		Optional transferable skills courses	0-5
Summer (July or August)	Case Study		10
Semester 3 (Sep- Feb)	Advanced Module II	Mandatory specialisation package	15
		Elective Specialisation courses	0-10
		Optional transferable skills courses	0-5
Semester 4 (Feb- Aug)	Master Dissertation		30
Total ECTS			120-132

Internship 6 or 12 ECTS

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Table 3: IMRD course structure. ECTS ranges for elective and optional courses are indicative.

5.1. General Requirements for obtaining the IMRD degree

- Students must spend a semester at a minimum of two different EU institutions (30 ECTS each)
- The Master Dissertation must be done at an institute where the student has already completed a course module
- Case Study (10 ECTS) is counted in curriculum of year 2 (semester 3 + 4) and is mandatory
- Internship is elective (6 or 12 ECTS), *guidelines on the [faculty website](#)*
- Maximum 10ECTS transferable skills courses (for example language courses) over the entire study period
- A minimum of 54 ECTS needs to be taken per academic year
- To obtain IMRD degree: completion of at least 120 ECTS and no more than 132 ECTS
- Mobility at an institute other than the home institute cannot be replaced by virtual mobility.

5.2. Curriculum and Mobility Requirements per track (5 tracks)

5.2.1. IMRD - Erasmus Mundus

Period	Economy	Environment	Society	Module
Summer, before the start of the academic year		Ghent University		BEPReP + Kick-off event
Semester 1 (Sep- Feb)		Ghent University		General entrance module
Semester 2 (Feb-June)	Slovak University of Nitra	University of Cordoba	Ghent University	Advanced module I
Summer (July or August)	To be decided during the first year of study			Case Study
Semester 3 (Sep- Feb)	University of Pisa	Humboldt University, Berlin	Agrocampus Ovest	Advanced module II
Semester 4 (Feb- Aug)	Slovak University of Nitra, University of Pisa	University of Cordoba, Humboldt University, Berlin	Ghent University, Agrocampus Ovest	Master Dissertation

Table 4: IMRD – Erasmus Mundus mobility options.

IMRD – Erasmus Mundus specific requirements

- Students select one of the three Focus Area's: Economy, Environment, Society,
- Students must spend a semester at a minimum of two different EU institutions (30 ECTS each)
- [Erasmus + partner country¹](#) students may spend a maximum of 3 months (15 ECTS) in an [Erasmus + partner country](#)
- [Erasmus + programme country](#) students may spend a maximum of 2 semesters (60 ECTS) in an [Erasmus + partner country](#)
- The Master Dissertation must be done at an institute where the student has already completed a course module
- Case Study (10 ECTS) is counted in curriculum of year 2 (semester 3 + 4) and is mandatory
- Internship is elective (6 or 12 ECTS), [guidelines on the faculty website](#)
- Maximum 10ECTS transferable skills courses (for example language courses) over the entire study period
- A minimum of 54 ECTS needs to be taken per academic year
- To obtain IMRD degree: completion of at least 120 ECTS and no more than 132 ECTS

¹ More information on what an Erasmus + programme or partner country is check the Erasmus + website: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/who-can-take-part_en

5.2.2. IMRD - VLIR

Period	Sustainable Development Goals and Society	Natural Resources and territorial studies	Models and land reform	Public administration	Module
Summer, before the start of the academic year	Ghent University				BEPReP + Kick-off event
Semester 1 (Sep- Feb)	Ghent University				General entrance module
Semester 2 (Feb-June)	Ghent University	University of Cordoba	University of Pretoria	Slovak University of Nitra	Advanced module I
Summer (July or August)	To be decided during the first year of study				Case Study
Semester 3 (Sep- Feb)	Agrocampus Ouest	Escuela Superior Politecnica del Litoral	University of Pisa	Can Tho University	Advanced module II
Semester 4 (Feb- Aug)	Ghent University				Master Dissertation

Table 5: IMRD – VLIR mobility options.

IMRD – VLIR specific requirements

- Students must spend a semester at a minimum of two different EU institutions (30 ECTS each)
- The Master Dissertation must be done at Ghent University
- Case Study (10 ECTS) is counted in curriculum of year 2 (semester 3 + 4) and is mandatory
- Semester 3: elective Internship with NGO (6 or 12 ECTS), see page 5, *guidelines on the [faculty website](#)*
- Maximum 10ECTS transferable skills courses (for example language courses) over the entire study period
- A minimum of 54 ECTS needs to be taken per academic year
- To obtain IMRD degree: completion of at least 120 ECTS and no more than 132 ECTS
 - Only available to students with a VLIR scholarship.

5.2.3. IMRD+ ATLANTIS

A distinction is made regarding the mobility between IMRD students enrolled at the IMRD consortium and US students enrolled at the University of Arkansas. Table 6 refers to the mobility of students enrolled at the IMRD consortium.

Period	Mobility	Module
Summer, before the start of the academic year	Ghent University	BEPReP + Kick-off event
Semester 1 (Sep- Feb)	Ghent University	General entrance module
Semester 2 (Feb-June)	Slovak University of Nitra or University of Cordoba	Advanced module I
Summer (July or August)	To be decided during the first year of study	Case Study
Semester 3 (Sep- Feb)	University of Arkansas	Advanced module II
Semester 4 (Feb- Aug)	University of Arkansas	Master Dissertation

Table 6: IMRD + ATLANTIS mobility options.

IMRD + ATLANTIS specific requirements

- ECTS balance should be kept on both the EU and US side: minimum 40 ECTS on each side
- Students must spend a semester at a minimum of two different EU institutions (30 ECTS each)
- The Master Dissertation must be done at an institute where the student has already completed a course module
- Case Study (10 ECTS) is counted in curriculum of year 2 (semester 3 + 4) and is mandatory
- Internship is elective (6 or 12 ECTS), *guidelines on the [faculty website](#)*
- Maximum 10ECTS transferable skills courses (for example language courses) over the entire study period
- A minimum of 54 ECTS needs to be taken per academic year
- To obtain the IMRD+ degree: completion of at least 120 ECTS and no more than 132 ECTS
- Maximum 3 students per academic year.

5.2.4. IMRD+ EKAFREE

A distinction is made regarding the mobility between IMRD students enrolled at the IMRD consortium and South Korean students enrolled at the Korea University or Seoul National University. Table 7 refers to the mobility of students enrolled at the IMRD consortium.

Period	Mobility	Module
Summer, before the start of the academic year	Ghent University	BEPReP + Kick-off event
Semester 1 (Sep- Feb)	Ghent University	General entrance module
Semester 2 (Feb-June)	Slovak University of Nitra or University of Cordoba	Advanced module I
Summer (July or August)	To be decided during the first year of study	Case Study
Semester 3 (Sep- Feb)	Korea University or Seoul National University	Advanced module II
Semester 4 (Feb- Aug)	Korea University or Seoul National University	Master Dissertation

Table 7: IMRD + EKAFREE mobility options.

IMRD + EKAFREE specific requirements

- ECTS balance should be kept on both the EU and Korean side: minimum 60 ECTS on each side
- A minimum of 10 months spent in the EU and 10 months spent in Korea
- Students must spend a semester at a minimum of two different EU institutions (30 ECTS each)
- The Master Dissertation must be done at an institute where the student has already completed a course module
- Case Study (10 ECTS) is counted in curriculum of year 2 (semester 3 + 4) and is mandatory. The credits count as EU credits
- Internship is elective (6 or 12 ECTS), *guidelines on the [faculty website](#)*
- Maximum 10ECTS transferable skills courses (for example language courses) over the entire study period
- A minimum of 54 ECTS needs to be taken per academic year
- To obtain the IMRD+ degree: completion of at least 120 ECTS and no more than 132 ECTS
- Maximum 3 students per academic year

5.2.5. IMRD+ EEURUDEV

A distinction is made regarding the mobility between IMRD students enrolled at the IMRD consortium and Ecuadorian students enrolled at ESPOL. Table 8 refers to the mobility of students enrolled at the IMRD consortium.

Period	Mobility	Module
Summer, before the start of the academic year	Ghent University	BEPReP + Kick-off event
Semester 1 (Sep- Feb)	Ghent University	General entrance module
Semester 2 (Feb-June)	Slovak University of Nitra or University of Cordoba	Advanced module I
Summer (July or August)	To be decided during the first year of study	Case Study
Semester 3 (Sep- Feb)	Escuela Superior Politecnica del Litoral	Advanced module II
Semester 4 (Feb- Aug)	Escuela Superior Politecnica del Litoral	Master Dissertation

Table 8: IMRD + EEURUDEV mobility options.

IMRD + EEURUDEV specific requirements

- ECTS balance should be kept on both the EU and Ecuadorian side: minimum 40 ECTS on each side
- Students must spend a semester at a minimum of two different EU institutions (30 ECTS each)
- The Master Dissertation must be done at an institute where the student has already completed a course module
- Case Study (10 ECTS) is counted in curriculum of year 2 (semester 3 + 4) and is mandatory. The credits count as EU credits
- Internship is elective (6 or 12 ECTS)
- Maximum 10ECTS transferable skills courses (for example language courses) over the entire study period
- A minimum of 54 ECTS needs to be taken per academic year
- To obtain the IMRD+ degree: completion of at least 120 ECTS and no more than 132 ECTS

5.3. Extra Info Curriculum

The course offer is prepared in the previous academic year and can be consulted in the online course catalogue (<http://www.ugent.be/en/education/coursecatalogue>). At the start of the academic year, the course offer is confirmed with the partners and presented to the students before October 1st.

In the course list, several courses are marked as obligatory as they are essential to guarantee desired learning outcomes. The advice is to choose courses from the list presented at the start of the academic year. This list is built on extensive experience of both students and academic personnel as well as on positive evaluations throughout the last years. There is a clear link with the learning outcomes and the content of these courses is relevant and beneficial for succeeding the programme.

Finally, students can opt for additional practical experience through an internship in a professional organisation or research institute. An internship allows students to analyse a problem the organization is facing. An internship counts for 6 or 12 ECTS. The internship requirements are described in the course description which is available in the online course catalogue . *Guidelines on the [faculty website](#)*

Local coordinators at the host institutes guide students for choosing courses and building the curriculum. Students can also always consult the academic coordinator at the IMRD secretariat of Ghent university (Prof.dr.ir. Stijn Speelman, stijn.speelman@ugent.be).

Students must submit their curricula in Oasis according to the following timeline:

Semester	Date	Deadline
Semester 1	7 Oct	Finalise mobility pathway
	15 Oct	Input UGent Courses in Oasis and submit.
	15 Nov	Submission curriculum entire first year. This will be done in consultation with the Study Track Counselor Isabelle Vantornhout (Isabelle.Vantornhout@UGent.be)
Semester 2	1 Mar	Last deadline to communicate any changes made to your curriculum in the second semester, These changes must always be communicated to both imrd@ugent.be and (isabelle.Vantornhout@UGent.be)
Semester 3	15 Oct	Submission curriculum entire second year. Any changes after this deadline need to be communicated to both imrd@ugent.be and (isabelle.Vantornhout@UGent.be)

Submitted curricula are reviewed by the IMRD secretariat, the academic coordinator and the Faculty Student Administration at Ghent university. These take into account a student's background, overall curriculum and mobility, dissertation topic. A balanced distribution of students amongst the EU Consortium partners is strived for.

If all requirements are met, the student is informed on the acceptance of the curriculum. If not, the student and academic coordinators engage in a consultation until an acceptable curriculum is reached. Finally, the chosen curricula are approved by the IMRD Management Board.

Students are bound by the approved programme. Students are obliged to pass exams for all courses selected at the start of the semester in order to graduate and obtain the degree and diploma.

The only final and official reference for the curricula is the online UGent OASIS platform. Courses are to be taken as registered here, and marks are announced through this platform at the end of each semester, and as

made available by the partners. **Any change in curriculum should be mentioned to both IMRD secretariat (imrd@ugent.be) and student track counselor Isabelle Vantornhout (Isabelle.Vantornhout@UGent.be).**

6. Exemptions

Exemptions of taking courses in order to complete the programme in less than 2 years can be asked by European students only. They have to meet one of the below mentioned requirements, and have to address a request to the Management Board.

European students, who have obtained an academic Master degree (issued by a recognised university) that is the same or equivalent with one of the following master degrees issued by the organising universities, can be granted an exemption of 60 ECTS maximum. The candidate should therefore ask for an equivalence declaration at the organising university with which s/he thinks his/her master degree is equivalent (the list of degrees may be reviewed every year).

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- Ghent University:
 - Master in de bio-ingenieurswetenschappen: Landbouwkunde;
 - Master in Nutrition and Rural Development;
- Humboldt University of Berlin:
 - M.Sc. Prozess- und Qualitätsmanagement;
 - M.Sc. Integrated Natural Resource Management;
 - M.Sc. Agricultural Economics;
 - M.Sc. International Master in Horticultural Science;
 - M.Sc. Land- und Gartenbauwissenschaften;
- Agrocampus Ouest:
 - Ingénieur agronome (M2) (ou diplôme équivalent et les diplômes d'ingénieurs délivrés par un établissement d'enseignement supérieur relevant du ministre chargé de l'agriculture, les Ecoles Nationales Supérieures ou l'Education Nationale dans les domaines de compétence de bioscience engineering).

The same exemption of 60 ECTS may be awarded to European students subscribed in the following master courses and who want to change to IMRD after successfully completing the first year of that master course:

- Master in Nutrition and Rural Development (Ghent University)
- M.Sc. Integrated Natural Resource Management (Humboldt University of Berlin).

Students obtaining the 60 credit exemption follow the second Advanced Module at another university than the one where they followed the course which led to the exemption (or obtained the equivalency).

Students obtaining 60 ECTS exemptions can obtain the degree after completing the case study, the Master Dissertation and 20 ECTS of course work minimum.

An exemption of 30 ECTS may be awarded, upon request, to European students who have obtained an academic master degree or equivalent in agricultural sciences, environmental sciences, forestry, geography, economics, sociology, rural development or equivalent disciplines which is judged to be completely equivalent with one of the above listed degrees. This exemption is given by the Coordinator of the IMRD after consultation (in case of doubts) with the host institute in which the student wants to start the programme.

Students obtaining a 30 ECTS exemption can obtain the degree after completing the case study, the Master Dissertation and 50 ECTS course work. No other exemptions are granted. Notwithstanding the right of the IMRD Managing Board (acting as the Examination Commission) to impose another decision in specific cases.

7. Teaching Standards

Teaching varies and conducted via lectures, seminars, group work, exercises, supervised paper writing, guided self-study and self-reliant study activities, work with databases and websites, online discussion groups, excursions, fieldwork and reporting. Problem based learning is essential. Great emphasis is put on applied research in the context of real-life rural development problems to be tackled during the dissertation and Case Study. It is expected that students work independently but also in small project groups for training interpersonal skills in order to discuss and form an own opinion. The international environment provides an opportunity to work with fellow students from all over the world for gaining intercultural communication skills and creating a global network of experts on rural development.

8. Exams and ECTS system

The IMRD programme uses the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). The ECTS system is a standard for comparing study attainment and performance of higher education students across the European Union and other collaborating European countries. More information can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/education/ects/users-guide/index_en.htm.

The minimum amount of credits to be passed in the 2-year programme is 120 ECTS, the maximum amount 132 ECTS. More credits can be taken but need to be paid for on top of the regular IMRD MSc tuition fee, according to the rate specified by the diploma issuing institution. If a student has enrolled for more ECTS than the minimum required (120), these courses can never be dropped (at the end of the programme) but they need to be successfully completed. They will always be taken into account by defining the final result of the degree.

Students should pass all enrolled for exams in order to obtain the IMRD joint degree diploma. Should a student not pass an examination, s/he cannot drop the course and will need to retake the exam. Students are not allowed to replace the failed course by taking up other courses in order to obtain the necessary amount of credits.

Exam marks from every partner are collected by the IMRD secretariat and converted to UGent grading scale which can be found on the [student portal page of the IMRD website](#).

Students taking courses at an IMRD partner are bound to examination and education regulations of the host institute offering the courses. They also need to comply with the requirements of IMRD and the guidelines set out in this Handbook. Distinction can be made between **3 type of examinations**:

- End of semester examinations
- Re-examinations
- Exam on distance, not common and based on conditions

8.1. End of semester examinations

Knowledge and skills regarding the courses is assessed in various ways: written (open/closed questions, open book exam) and oral examinations tests during Modules, written practical reports, essays, oral presentations, field work and reports. Examinations are to be taken at the organizing partner. Marks/results

are communicated and official after deliberation at the end of each (re-)exam period at UGent, after which results are made visible on the student's personal page on the online OASIS platform of Ghent University. This happens on a specific date and time, which is communicated to the students. Students may ask feedback from teachers and professors, within the rules of each partner. Not passing for end of semester exams, gives students a chance to take re-exams at the same partner.

8.2. Retake examinations

Students should take (re-)exams at the same partner that organized them at the end of the semester.

8.3. Exam on distance

Intensive mobility and colliding academic calendars of partners might prevent a student from attending the organising institute. For this reason **ONLY** the student can request an "exam on distance", i.e. take the exam at another partner upon previously confirmed supervision. A student should obtain permission to take an exam on distance **no later than 3 weeks before the exam date** by following these steps:

- seek permission of the organising professor / lecturer;
- seek permission of both local coordinators (the organising and hosting university);
- seek permission of the IMRD Secretariat.

9. Quality Control and representation

The IMRD Quality System is based on student feedback and input from our large network. Students are asked to evaluate many aspects: courses, teaching activities, guidance and services at the hosting institutes, case-study experience, Master Dissertation research and the overall programme quality. Continuous improvement is a key aspect in this perspective.

The consortium requests each cohort to appoint one student representative, being a spokesperson and the intermediary between the IMRD Secretariat and the students, who is invited to non-confidential parts of MB meetings for raising issues or concerns common to all students.

10. Appeal

In case a student wants to make an appeal, the below line of communication should be followed:

- 1) Contact the Local Coordinator of the IMRD programme at the hosting institute;
- 2) if the issue is related to local rules and regulations, and no satisfactory solution at the IMRD Local Coordinator is found, the student should contact the ombudsperson of the local faculty or hosting institute.
- 3) when the issue is related to IMRD rules and regulations, and no satisfactory solution at the IMRD Local Coordinator is found, OR if the issue is related to local rules and regulations, and no satisfactory solution at the hosting institute ombudsperson is found, then address the IMRD International MB in writing; either through your student representative or directly by mailing the technical coordinator Larre Lafort (imrd@ugent.be);
- 4) In case no satisfactory solution has been reached with the IMRD International MB, one can finally opt to contact the UGent ombudsperson. Consult the education and examination code of UGent for

further information, available at <https://www.ugent.be/student/en/class-exam-exchange-intern/class-exam/OEREnglish>

11. Diploma and Diploma Supplement

Successful students obtain the qualification and joint degree of International Master of Science in Rural Development, and possibly a second degree in IMRD⁺ (ATLANTIS/EKAFREE/EERUDEV).

The IMRD diploma (based on ECTS system) is issued/signed by all EU partners. and accompanied by a diploma supplement adding additional info on evaluation systems and course curriculum. The joint diploma is delivered at UGent. The diploma supplement is digitally available with an authenticity code, which can be validated on the UGent website.

After graduation you will receive an email from the faculty student administration with your diploma supplement. You will also be able to download a digital version of the diploma from Oasis. This digital version only contains the signature of the UGent rector. The hard copy of your diploma will be sent to you by registered mail after it is signed by all IMRD partners. This can take up to three months after graduation.

12. Attendance, Rules and Regulations

IMRD students have to comply with:

- the general IMRD rules and regulations described in the Student Agreement/Handbook. In case of disputes, the UGent [Education and Examination Code](#) serves as a reference.
- Course and examination regulations of the hosting institute.

Students need to arrive on time for the start of the programme. The IMRD Secretariat needs to be informed in case of temporary suspension or permanent termination of the programme. Students must also familiarise themselves with the Student Handbook and the latest version of guidelines and announcements on the IMRD website.

Leave of absence is **ONLY** permitted in **2 cases**: 1) Medical reasons or 2) Matters regarding family

All students must participate in all IMRD activities. In this respect, attendance of classes is mandatory, and repetitive or continued absence of classes will lead to disciplinary measures.

Any case of Fraud or Plagiarism is considered a serious offence. Plagiarism is considered to be a form of fraud and an irregularity within the IMRD consortium. The UGent [Education/Examination Code](#) serves as a reference for measures to be taken. The partner where a student committed fraud has the first right of action and initiates the necessary measures.

Any student that exhibits repeated gross misconduct or repeated misconduct within the framework of the IMRD programme will face disciplinary measures. It is the responsibility of any student, staff member, lecturer or third party to report misconduct to the IMRD secretariat. The IMRD Management Board then takes appropriate action. This includes, but is not limited to: suspension, and/or possible expulsion of the programme, and/or the suspension and/or termination of any scholarship provided by the IMRD consortium.

13. Graduation and continuation of study

Students that complete all the requirements for obtaining the IMRD degree(s), as laid out in section 5, within 24 months of their first enrollment will be invited to the IMRD graduation ceremony in September of their graduation year. Graduates receive their fully signed IMRD joint degree and any additional degrees within three months of the graduation ceremony.

If a student does not graduate within the first 24 months they will need to continue their studies by applying for additional semesters. If a student graduates after the fall semester (September-February), they will receive their degree(s) within three months of their graduation.

All students that attend additional semesters must pay corresponding fees. The fees are calculated as follows:

- For students that only need to complete their Master's Dissertation (30ECTS):
€ 247.90 fixed amount + € 11.90 per ECTS = **€ 604.9**
- For students where the total sum of course ECTS is **less** than 15:
€ 247.90 fixed amount + € 11.90 per ECTS
- For students where the total sum of course ECTS is **more** than 15:
Full tuition fee. Waivers may be requested through a motivated letter by the student to the MB.
- For students that need to complete the Master's Dissertation as well as additional courses:
Full tuition fee. Waivers may be requested through a motivated letter by the student to the MB.

These additional fees do not apply to students who were unable to complete the programme due to a leave of absence as stated in section 12.

14. Sources of information

The most important sources of info:

- IMRD website (www.imrd.ugent.be): General information for applicants;
- OASIS (<https://oasis.ugent.be>): enrollment and curriculum;
- UFORA (<https://ufora.ugent.be>): courses and announcements;
- Local coordinators: For specific information relating to issues at a partner institution. Check the [IMRD website](#) for the contacts of your local coordinator
- International Information desk for students at the Faculty of Bioscience Engineering (students.itc@ugent.be), UGent: all generic questions, not specific to academic content or mobility choices
- [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) (ITC Bioscience UGent): For information related to social activities
- IMRD secretariat (imrd@ugent.be): For when all else fails!

15. Student Associations

Students participating in Erasmus Mundus programmes are advised to join EM Students/Alumni Association (EMA), gathering all Erasmus Mundus students/graduates (www.em-a.eu). Once you graduate, keep in touch via the alumni portal at Ghent University: <https://www.ugent.be/alumnus/en>

Other interesting associations:

- Int. Assoc. of students in Agricultural and related Sciences (IAAS: <http://www.iaasworld.org/>)

- The European Association of Agricultural Economists (EAAE: <http://www.eaae.org/>)
- Erasmus Student Network (ESN: <https://www.esn.org/>)

16. Practical info

16.1. Fees

Students must pay a tuition fee at the start of each academic year to follow the IMRD programme. Consult the [website](#) for the exact tuition fee. Annually the Management Board reserves the right to adjust the Tuition Fee. Students already enrolled in the programme are not subjected to tuition fee changes.

The tuition fee is paid at UGent with the Consortium as beneficiary, giving access to all partners. It covers the lectures, case study participation, institutional academic fee for each partners where you take courses and an all in insurance.

It does not include travel, visa and residence permits, accommodation, cost of living and subsistence, teaching materials etc. The IMRD partners have services for foreign students providing assistance in arranging accommodation, student work, social support and the like.

Paid tuition fees are not refunded. In case a student wants to stop the programme before December 1st of the first academic year, the MB can be addressed.

16.2. Cost of living

Ranges from € 850- € 1200 per month, depending on the location. Below we list average monthly rent, in Euro, for a 1 bedroom apartment in each of the EU cities based on numbeo.com data:

(outside – inside city centre)

- [Berlin](#) (Germany): 649 - 868
- [Cordoba](#) (Spain): 350 - 466
- [Ghent](#) (Belgium): 574 - 717
- [Nitra](#) (Slovakia): 333 - 433
- [Pisa](#) (Italy): 475 - 624
- [Rennes](#) (France): 452 - 509

16.3. Grants and scholarships

IMRD is supported by the Erasmus Mundus and VLIR-UOS. Both programmes provide a limited number of full scholarships for the respective IMRD tracks.

The [IMRD website](#) displays all info regarding possible grants and scholarships (+ terms and conditions). More details may be found in the student agreement.

16.4. Reimbursements

Students may address the IMRD secretariat to claim reimbursements for certain activities during their master programme. The reimbursement procedure is as follows:

1. Send an email to imrd@ugent.be with a short description of your claim
2. You will receive an email on your **personal email address** (non-UGent) with a link and instructions to a digital reimbursement tool.

3. Fill in and upload the necessary documentation in the tool
4. Once processed the reimbursement will be made as soon as possible.

The following activities are eligible for reimbursements:

- Language courses taken at the University Language Centre of one of the partner institutions and that are part of your curriculum are reimbursed (up to 10ECTS). If you fail a language course and need to re-enroll in it the second inscription will not be reimbursed.
- Any costs made by a student for organizing or attending specific IMRD management related activities such as the IMRD Management Board meeting, kick – off event or alumni meetings.
- VLIR scholarship students may have up to 1000euro reimbursed for costs made to attend the Case Study. This includes travel, visa and accommodation.
- VLIR scholarship students that spend a semester at a south partner institute (ESPOL, CTU or UP) may have up to 1000euro reimbursed for costs made. This includes travel and visa.
- IMRD+ students may request reimbursements for additional costs relating to academic admission at the double degree partner institution, such as legalization of diploma's or translation costs.

16.5. Insurance

UGent signed a contract with the company MAPFRE. The "MARSCH Go Safe Corporate Business Contract" covers the minimum requirements. The IMRD Secretariat requests to adhere to the insurance scheme before arrival. The insurance cost is included in the tuition fee. More info can be found at

http://www.ugent.be/en/administration/insurances/all_in_insurance_policy

<https://www.marshconnect.eu/empaMC.htm>

16.6. Travel

The IMRD Secretariat does not assist you in any travel arrangements. Students are responsible for arranging and paying travel to Europe and between the hosting institutes.

16.7. Accommodation

Local coordinators as well as students in the second year will assist in finding accommodation. Types of housing and rent vary from country to country. Finding accommodation is difficult, we recommend to accept the offer by local housing offices.

16.8. Permits and visa

Students are responsible for arranging the necessary travel documents, visa and residence permits. Partners and the IMRD Secretariat will advise and provide necessary information and supporting documents. Students should start early in initiating procedures, well ahead of moving to host country.