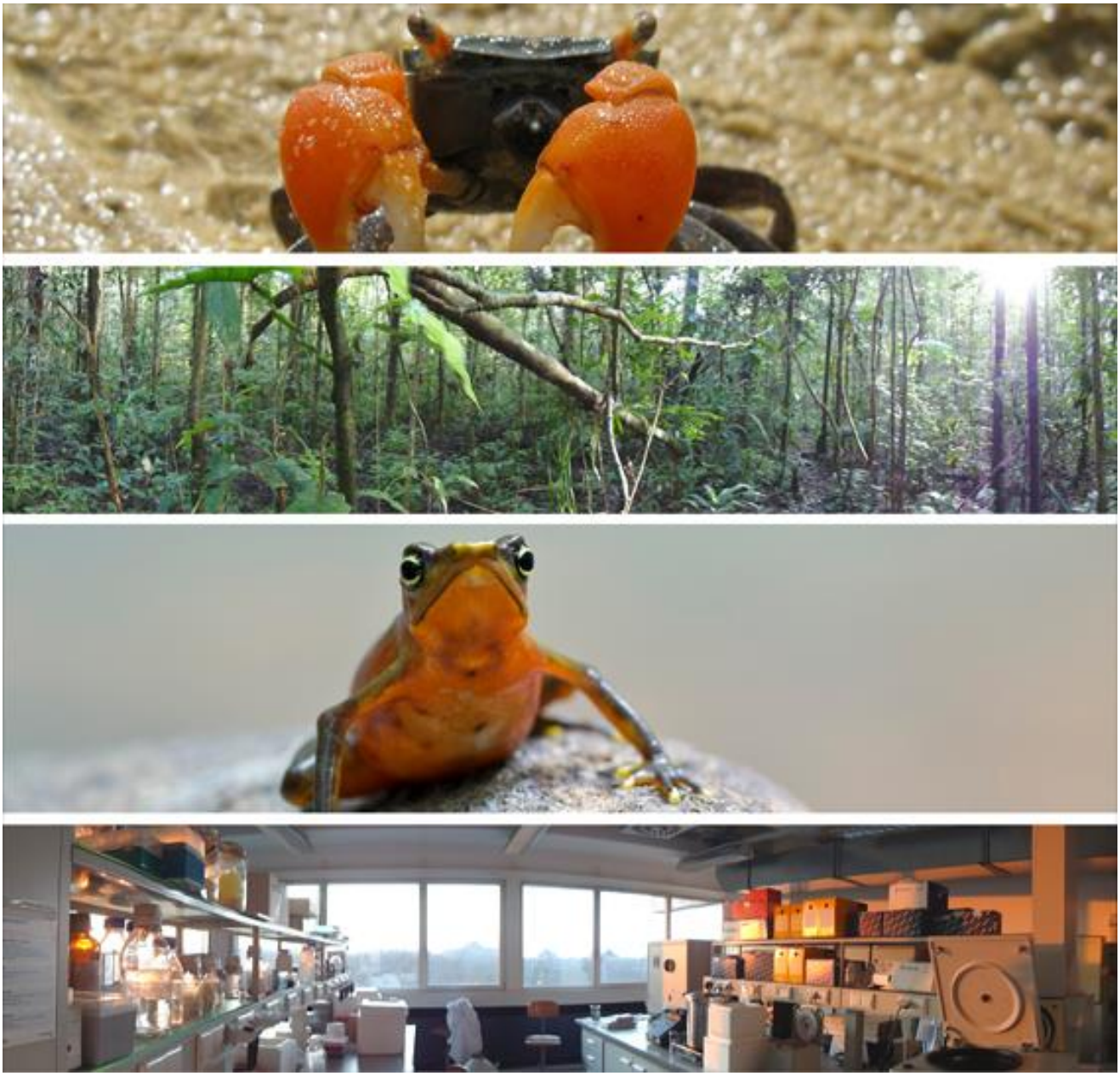

Master of Science in Biology:
A student manual

VRIJE
UNIVERSITEIT
BRUSSEL

Faculty of Science and Bioengineering Sciences
BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Master of Science in Biology:
A Student Manual

BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT – VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT BRUSSEL

Contents:

Dear Student,

Welcome to the MSc programme. This manual compiles useful information, guidelines and links that will help you to obtaining the degree 'Master of Science in Biology' at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). You can find the same information on '**My.BioVUB**', the student-oriented web page of the Biology Department's website **http://we.vub.ac.be/en/biology-department/**.

If you can't find the information you need through this manual, send an E-mail to the Department's Secretariat (biologie@vub.ac.be), or, for specific enquiries, contact the relevant Department member(s). A list of Department members, their contact details and their administrative functions is provided at the end of this manual (section 13).

1. Activating your VUB NetID

One of the first things to do when starting your study programme at the VUB is creating a VUB NetID. You can do this through the URL:
https://idsapp.ulb.ac.be/pam/pamsignup.php?language=uk

This is done based on your enrolment number [blue arrow] and the PIN-code [red arrow] on your student ID card.

You can make the request from a computer at home, at work or on campus. You will receive your NetID and e-mail address within 24 hours of completing the account request procedure.
TIP: When creating your password, pay attention to the type of keyboard you are using (AZERTY or QWERTY), whether Shift- Lock and/or the numeric keypad are active

Your VUB E-mail address and NetID are important

- **to access your VUB e-mail account**: messages from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel related to cancelled lessons, classroom changes, exam results, etc. are only sent to your VUB e-mail address, which will be of the format “Firstname.Name@vub.be”. TIP: You can read your VUB mail at home after entering the mail server of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel in your e-mail programme (see the ‘read and send WebNotes e-mail at the VUB’ on http://webnotes.vub.ac.be/¬eid=133). You can consult your e-mails from anywhere in the world via the online Microsoft platform: **https://login.microsoftonline.com/**

- **to access MY.VUB**: You'll need it for practical matters, such as registering your number plate if you come to the campus by car (see “4.1 Transportation”), looking for a student job, etc...
- **to acces the learning platform PointCarré**, which offers a wide range of e-tools (course calendar, course materials, forums, exercises, etc.)
- **to access VUBnext**, the WIFI network of Campus Etterbeek.

2. Subscribing to course units

'Self Service for Students' is a recently introduced E-tool that allows students to manage their own administration. 'Self Service for Students' is accessed through the URL: **https://student.cumulus.vub.ac.be/psp/CALIPROD/?cmd=login.** After logging in through the portal, you can:

- Subscribe for course units
- Manage your personal data (address, phone, e-mail,…)
- Consult your study data (enrolment, programme, marks,…)
- Check the status of your payment

You can log in with your NetID and password (once you have created this; see above).

- **The subscription deadline for 1st semester and annual course units is October 15th of the same academic year.**
- **The subscription deadline for 2nd semester course units is February 28th of the same academic year.**

If you have questions about ‘Self-Service for Students’ or problems with subscribing, contact the helpdesk 'First Aid Registration' through the URL:
https://my.vub.ac.be/en/ehbo-registration
or check the tutorial on this URL:
https://my.vub.ac.be/en/faq/how-can-i-enrol-courses-2

3. Pointcarré

Pointcarré is the VUB’s digital learning platform where you can find content descriptions (including descriptions of the used forms of examination), and course material (e.g., slide shows, papers, ...) for each individual course unit. To access Pointcarré, you need to log in with your VUB NetID on this URL:
https://cas.vub.ac.be/cas/login
Note that you need to be registered for a specific course unit in order to access its Pointcarré pages.

4. Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

In order to maintain a high international standard of education, the Master of Science in Biology programme is built around a number of Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs). The ILOs describe the capacities and skills a student should have acquired upon graduation of

the programme. Besides six general ILOs for the programme 'Master of Science in Biology', specific ILOs have been formulated for each of the graduation options offered at the VUB:

General

ILO1. has a broad knowledge on living organisms and their relationship with abiotic matter, and understands biology in an integrative way, across the traditional levels of biological organization.

ILO2. has the necessary knowledge on concepts and models in basic natural sciences to select appropriate methods for the analysis of biological data and processes, and to draw scientific conclusions supported by appropriate statistical methods.

ILO3. is able to efficiently perform an extended literature study in a scientific domain, to assimilate the state-of-the-art, to extract novel scientifically interesting research topics, and to turn relevant questions into a well-structured scientific research plan.

ILO4. is able to actively collaborate with researchers in the lab or in the field, and to assume responsibilities in such a group.

ILO5. is able to present scientific results and research plans in a clear and concise way, both written (paper and project) and orally, to peers as well as to the broader community, including in English

ILO6. understands how scientific research plays an important role in the society, and understands both the opportunities and ethical implications of it.

Graduation option 'Genetics, Cell, and Developmental Biology'

ILO7. has a broad knowledge of biological systems, from molecules to the level of cells and organisms, and understands therefore the functioning of microbial, vegetal or animal organisms (including humans).

ILO8. can independently perform and analyze experiments in a molecular laboratory and is able to link the obtained results with the molecular, cellular and physiological functions of the studied organism.

ILO9. can understand and analyze past and present experiments in one field of life sciences, can generate new approaches or concepts applicable to another research field, and has an attitude of constantly updating his/her knowledge with new developments and methods in biology.

Graduation option 'Environment, Biodiversity and Ecosystems'

ILO10. has a broad knowledge on methods and concepts in biodiversity, ecology, biogeography and evolution.

ILO11. can independently perform and analyze observations, both in the field and under lab conditions, and is able to investigate research questions on biodiversity and ecosystems across levels of biological organization.

ILO12. Is integrated in the scientific community through direct interaction with professionals and participation in ongoing research, and has an attitude of constantly updating his/her knowledge with new developments and methods in biology.

Graduation option 'Herpetology'

ILO13. has a broad knowledge on the systematics, taxonomy, natural history and evolution of amphibians and reptiles.

ILO14. can independently perform and analyze herpetological observations, in the field and under controlled lab conditions, and is able to investigate and understand these observations in an integrative way, across the levels of biological organization.

ILO15. Is integrated in the herpetological community through direct interaction with professional herpetologists, participation in ongoing research, and professional internship in a natural history museum or herpetological lab, and has an attitude of constantly reflecting on his/her knowledge and to update it with new developments and methods in biology.

Graduation option 'Human Ecology (ICP)'

ILO16. has a broad knowledge on human-environment interactions with a focus on biodiversity and biological resources in human-altered ecosystems.

ILO17. can independently perform field work, surveys and experiments and is able to investigate research questions on the human-environment interaction through modern analytical techniques, on humans and on the ecology of biological resources, with emphasis on data treatment.

ILO18. Is integrated in the scientific and in policy communities through direct interaction with professionals and has an attitude of constantly updating his/her knowledge with new developments and methods in biology, to develop sound, science-based policies within a (global and) development context.

Graduation option 'Tropimundo' (Erasmus Mundus Masters Course in Tropical Biodiversity and Ecosystems)

ILO19. demonstrates enhanced knowledge of the field of tropical biodiversity and ecosystems, including interdisciplinary fields, and masters the key concepts in their ecological and socio-ecological functioning, demonstrates enhanced understanding of the constituting biodiversity and environmental elements of

one or more tropical ecosystems and demonstrates enhanced understanding of processes and/or methods and/or techniques in tropical biodiversity and ecosystem studies.

ILO20. can independently perform field work, surveys and experiments in tropical ecosystems (in situ) and demonstrate enhanced ability to work and learn independently and as a member of a team, and/or to generate ideas, and/or to identify problems, and/or to develop creative and effective solutions, and/or to synthesise and communicate concepts and knowledge while maintaining a critical judgment.

ILO21. demonstrates enhanced understanding of the stakes, challenges and open issues of conservation and management and therefore must be able to situate natural and anthropogenic impacts on tropical biodiversity and ecosystems into a holistic context, and to demonstrate scientific, ethical and social understanding.

5. Course schedules

Course schedules for all graduation options of the programmes 'Master of Science in Biology' and 'MSc in Marine and Lacustrine Science and Management (Oceans and Lakes)' can be accessed through the URL:
http://splus.cumulus.vub.ac.be:1183/1onevenjr/studsetWE_onevenjr_English.html.

6. Study Guidance Center

The Study Guidance Center (SGC) offers many forms of study guidance that may be useful to improve your study success. In each phase of your study curriculum, you can consult us with questions related to your study techniques and progress. The SGC includes a motivated team of specialized counselors providing the guidance that suits you best, on an individual bases or in group sessions. This team offers guidance in the following fields:

- Preparation for exams (planning, consultation, feedback after exams, …)
- Study skills (language training, study method, speaking, writing and reading, …)
- Well-being of the student (psychological guidance, workshops, study training, …)
- Studying under specific conditions (studying with a disability, sports career, working while studying, …)

The SGC of the Faculty of Science and Bio-engineering Sciences is situated in Building F of Campus Etterbeek, and is accessed via the Esplanade. It is open from 9am to 6pm on Monday-Thursday, and from 9am to 8pm on Friday. For questions and enquiries, you can also contact the SGC by E-mail (guidance @vub.ac.be) or by phone (+32 (0)2 629 2306). More information on study guidance can be found on the SGC's web page:
https://my.vub.ac.be/en/study-guidance.

7. Teaching and Exam Regulations

All programmes and graduation options, as well as their exams are conform to the Teaching and Exam regulations of the Faculty of Science and Bioengineering Sciences. The teaching regulations determine the organisation of the academic year and the admission requirements for students. The exam regulations determine the timing and organisation of the exams, and when students are allowed to look into their corrected exams. The University's teaching and exam regulations can be downloaded through this URL:

https://my.vub.ac.be/en/teaching-and-examination-regulations

8. Oral exams

A frequently used form of evaluation in all graduation options of the Master of Science in Biology programme is oral examination. If you are not familiar with this type of examination, we like to reassure you that there is nothing to be nervous or worried about. Oral exams provide a flexible and interactive way to test your depth of knowledge and conceptual insight in the course matter. In addition, a personal conversation allows you to revise or correct your answers on the fly, and allows your teacher to direct or extend the discussion by asking additional questions (or rephrasing them), and give immediate feedback regarding your performance. Most oral exams are accompanied by a "written preparation", which means that you receive ample time to prepare your answers and write them down before you start the oral discussion with your lecturer. Details regarding the form of examination for each course unit can be found on the digital learning platform Pointcarré (https://cas.vub.ac.be/cas/login). In addition, at the start of a new course unit, every lecturer explains the form and organization of the exam. If you still have doubts on how to deal with the different examination forms, check the activity calendar of the Study Guidance Center for guiding sessions on Exam skills through this link:
https://my.vub.ac.be/en/node/415/#Guidance_activities

9. The Master thesis

As a Master student, you have to conduct a research project supervised by one of our principal investigators, and write a dissertation (a "Master thesis") in order to obtain the degree 'Master of Sciences in Biology'. This thesis accounts for 30 ECTs and is prepared in the 2nd year of your Master programme. A document with useful guidelines and evaluation criteria can be downloaded through this URL:
http://dbio.vub.ac.be/documents/Master_thesis_guidelines.pdf.

10. Plagiarism

Whether preparing a lab report, a paper manuscript, a slideshow presentation, or your Master thesis, it is very important that you properly cite any used information sources. Reproducing text fragments or figures from published papers or internet sources (even if it is just one sentence) without adding a proper reference to the original work is called plagiarism. Plagiarism is not accepted in the scientific community, and the VUB is currently establishing a policy to prevent plagiarism. Being caught plagiarising may have severe consequences for your evaluation and even your graduation. A document that explains how to recognize and avoid plagiarism can be downloaded through this URL:
http://dbio.vub.ac.be/documents/Plagiarism.pdf

11. Professional Internship.

All graduation options of the Master of Science in Biology programme provide the opportunity to conduct an internship, allowing you to gain experience related to your study

in a professional environment, like a company, a governmental institute, a museum, or a research lab. The internship is an elective course unit accounting for 6 or 9 ECTS. Once you found and internship, you'll need an internship contract. An 'Internship agreement request form' can be downloaded here:
https://my.vub.ac.be/en/uniform-agreement-unpaid-internships
and should be sent to the VUB Career Center by email: **careercenter@vub.ac.be.**

12. VUB Career Center

The best way to prepare your professional career while studying at the VUB, is by seeking advice and assistance at the VUB Career Center (VCC). The VCC, apart from helping you to find a suitable internship position for the course unit 'professional internship', can give useful advice on how to compose your CV and how to increase your chances during job applications. The web page of the VCC can be accessed through the URL:
http://www.vub.ac.be/careercenter/

13. Contact details

A list of all secretariats, lecturers and teaching assistants that you may have to contact during your programme is provided below. The list includes contact details and administrative functions.

Secretariats:

Secretariat of the Faculty of Science and Bioengineering Sciences
Building F, 7th floor, office 4F107b
Student administration:
Phone: +32 (0)2 629 3389
E-mail: studentenadministratie@we.vub.ac.be
Study Programme Counseling:
Irene Tallon
Phone: +32 (0)2 629 1743
E-mail: trajectbegeleiding@we.vub.ac.be

Scretariat of the Biology Department
Mr. Bert Vervloesem
Building F, 7th floor, Office 7F426
Phone: +32 (0)2 629 3405
E-mail: secrdbio@vub.be

Coordination /Secretariat of the MSc programme 'Oceans and Lakes'
Coordinator :Dr. Karolien Van Puyvelde
Secretariat: Melissa Ferré
Building F, 8th floor, offices F8.06/F8.08
Phone: +32 (0)2 629 3402
E-mail: oceansandlakes@vub.ac.be

Coordination/Secretariat of de Msc graduation option 'Human Ecology (ICP)'
Coordinator: Prof. Dr. Iris Stiers
Building F, 7th floor, Office 7F414
Phone: +32 (0)2 629 3726
E-mail: humecoap@vub.ac.be

Lecturers:

Prof. Dr. Franky Bossuyt
Amphibian Evolution Lab (AMFI)
Building G, 4th floor, Office 4G110
Phone: + 32 (0)2 629 3648
E-mail: fbossuyt@vub.ac.be
Functions:
- Coordinator MSc graduation option 'Herpetology'
- Chairman exam committee 'Master of Science in Biology'

Prof. Dr. Farid Dahdouh-Guebas
Plant Biology and Nature Management (APNA)
Building F, 7th floor, Office 7F406
Phone: +32 (0)2 629 3422, +32 (0)2 650 2137
E-mail: fdahdouh@ulb.ac.be
Functions:
- Coordinator MSc graduation option 'Tropimundo'

Prof. Dr. Mylène D'Haeseleer
E-mail: Mylene.DHaeseleer@vub.ac.be

Prof. Dr. Gustavo J. Gutierrez
Laboratory of Cell Genetics (CEGE)
Building F, 7th floor, Office 7F423
Phone: +32 (0)2 629 3404
E-mail: Gustavo.Gutierrez.Gonzalez@vub.ac.be

Prof. Dr. Jean-Pierre Hernalsteens
Viral Genetics Laboratory (GEVI)
Building E, 6de floor, Office E6.07
Phone: +32 (0)2 629 1915
E-mail: jphernal@vub.ac.be

Prof. Dr. Marc Kochzius
Unit of Ecology and Systematics (ECOL)
Building F, 8th floor, Office F8.12
Phone: +32 (0)2 629 3406
E-mail: marc.kochzius@vub.ac.be
Functions:
- Programme Director MSc programme 'Oceans & Lakes'
- Chairman exam committee 'Oceans & Lakes'

Prof. Dr. Nico Koedam
Plant Biology and Nature Management (APNA)
Building F, 7th floor, Office 7F416
Phone: +32 (0)2 629 3413
E-mail: nikoedam@vub.ac.be
Functions:
- Coordinator MSc graduation option 'Ecology and Biodiversity'

Prof. Dr. Luc Leyns
Laboratory of Cell Genetics (CEGE)
Building F, 7th floor, Office 7F424
Phone: +32 (0)2 629 3443
E-mail: Luc.Leyns@vub.be
Functions:
- Coordinator MSc graduation option 'Molecular and Cellular Life Sciences'
- Chairman Biology Department

Prof. Dr. Harry olde Venterink
Plant Biology and Nature Management (APNA)
Building F, 7th floor, Office 7F422
Phone: +32 (0)2 629 3447
E-mail: Harry.Olde.Venterink@vub.ac.be
Functions:
- Erasmus Coordinator Biology Department

Prof. Dr. Kim Roelants
Amphibian Evolution Lab (AMFI)
Building G, 4th floor, Office 4G110
Phone: +32 (0)2 629 3410
E-mail: Kim.Roelants@vub.be
Functions:
- Co-coordinator MSc graduation option 'Herpetology'

Prof. Dr. Ir. Guy Smagghe
Laboratory of Cell Genetics (CEGE)
Phone: +32 (0)9 264 6150
E-mail: guy.smagghe@vub.ac.be,
guy.smagghe@ugent.be

Prof. Dr. Ludwig Triest
Plant Biology and Nature Management (APNA)
Building F, 7th floor, Office 7F415
Phone: +32 (0)2 629 3421
E-mail: ltriest@vub.ac.be
Functions:
- Programme Director MSc graduation option 'Human Ecology'
- Chairman exam committee 'Bachelor of Science in de Biologie'

Prof. Dr. Bram Vanschoenwinkel
Plant Biology and Nature Management (APNA)
Building F, 7th floor, Office 7F407
Phone: +32 (0)2 629 3057
E-mail: bvschoen@vub.ac.be

Teaching Assistants:

Ms. Lise Beirinckx
Plant Biology and Nature Management (APNA)
Building F, 7th floor, Office 7F419b
E-mail: Lise.Beirinckx@vub.ac.be

Mr. Dennis De Ryck

Plant Biology and Nature Management (APNA)
Building F, 7th floor, Office 7F412
Phone: +32 (0)2 629 3433
E-mail: dderyck@vub.ac.be

Ms. Nele Vanbekbergen
Laboratory of Cell Genetics (CEGE)
Building F, 7th floor, Office 7F430b
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Ms. Rosa van der Ven
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Building F, 8th floor, Office 8F07b
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E-mail: Rvdven@vub.ac.be

Ms. Anne van Zon
Plant Biology and Nature Management (APNA)
Campus Etterbeek, Building F, 7th floor, Office 7F419b
E-mail: Anne.Van.Zon@vub.ac.be