

## Belgium: Intensive Preparatory Year for Newcomers (IVAN)

### Introduction

**Title:** Intensive Preparatory Year for Newcomers (IVAN)

**Country:** Flanders, Belgium has different initiatives for newcomers. This case is the preparatory year, situated in the Province of Vlaams-Brabant. The project is implemented and currently run by UCLL and the Flemish employment service VDAB.

**Type of tool:** Holistic training including screening, coaching, education and assessment of newcomers.

**Target group:** Highly skilled or higher educated newcomers (mainly refugees).

The intensive preparatory year (in short IVAN) is specifically intended for **non-Dutch speaking newcomers** who are already **highly educated** in their home country. IVAN is a unique one-year course that helps them to start in higher education in accounting, information technology, business automation, store management or chemistry.

These **5 domains** have been identified because of several reasons:

- These courses and their related jobs are less dependent on a fluent level of Dutch;
- They provide different educational options afterwards (HBO5, Bachelor, Academic courses, ...);
- They lead to bottleneck jobs and the courses are therefore supported and financed by VDAB (the employment service);
- The management department of UCLL is very experienced in it.

UCLL started already 20 years ago with support courses and guidance on Dutch language for newcomers. Main bottleneck is instruction language and technical jargon, and of course academic Dutch.

During the preparatory year the newcomers receive a **combination of courses** to enhance their academic Dutch, but through courses of secondary adult education in the first semester (maths, computer skills, courses within the chosen domain, ...) and subjects of vocational education in their specific field, they strengthen the Dutch jargon of the domains and educational instruction language. They exercise learning and study skills and get a personal development planning towards further studies or work. They also get a second language (French or English).

After the preparatory year, they should be ready to continue on the regular education programmes (HBO5, Bachelor or Master) or will be supported on the way to a job according to their educational level.

### Organisation and description of the tool

## Implementation

The preparatory year starts in September and ends at the end of June. This **full-time** training takes place in **Leuven**.

If the level of Dutch is good enough, the student can also start in February after passing an entry test in Dutch and some screening about general knowledge. Preferably, however, students take one full academic year.

The **academic year** encompasses the following phases:

- *Info sessions* – coaching to the right training programme
- *Screening week* (from 31 August) with several assessments:
  - Test Dutch (NT2)
  - This is a test taken by the ILT (university language centre KU Leuven, testing the level of the different language skills
  - Basic test mathematics
  - Focus on instructions and numeracy
  - Office Skills
  - Computerskills, Word, Excel, ...
  - Motivation test
  - LASSI (Learning and Study Strategies Inventory), American test translated, adapted for foreign speakers by Prof. Lacante
    - ✓ Information processing
    - ✓ Study techniques
    - ✓ Time management
- *Semester 1* (from 11 September). The programme for accountancy would look like this (the others have a similar composition with subjects in the chosen domain):
  - Dutch (NT2)
  - Maths
  - PC skills
  - Excel
  - Introduction to accountancy
  - Basics of accountancy
  - Orientation to society
- *Semester 2* (from the end of January till the end of June). The programme for accountancy would look like this. The others have a similar composition:
  - Dutch (NT2)
  - English or French
  - Civil, trade and economic rights
  - Basics double accountancy
  - Coaching activities
  - Open learning centre activities
- *Start in higher education / preparing for work*: during and after completion.

There is an option to combine IVAN with a work placement. In that case, the second semester is replaced by a traineeship in a company and an individual tailor-made study programme, still based on language learning and jargon.

IVAN provides a **holistic approach**: it is an orientation programme that includes assessment tests, training and counselling.

## Description of the target group

Foreign speaking students with a secondary, bachelor-or master diploma from their home country, who are looking for a supplementary education to improve their chances on the labour market.

## Policy context

This initiative was set up in the context of an ESF project in 2013 for immigrants with an educational perspective and continued in 2017 in an ESF, from the fund called AMIF, the European Funds for Asylum, Migration and Integration.

Even though this initiative was started as part of a project, UCLL had decided to continue the organisation of this preparatory year with own financial resources, joined by VDAB Vlaams-Brabant.

## Link

<https://www.ucll.be/studeren/student-aan-ucll/begeleiding/ivan-voorbereidingsjaar>

