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**The student association for Biomedical
Sciences and Medicine students in Leuven!**



Dear students,

Welcome to Leuven!

Soon, you will begin your journey in Biomedical Sciences or Medicine at KU Leuven. This marks the start of an exciting new chapter filled with challenges, unforgettable experiences, and countless opportunities. Of course, you will also become very familiar with our beautiful Gasthuisberg campus. And as an added bonus, all those bike rides up the hill will probably leave you with some impressively strong legs!

If you are eagerly counting down the days until the start of the academic year, or perhaps feeling a little nervous, do not worry. Medica is here for you!

What is Medica? Medica is the student association for and by students of Biomedical Sciences and Medicine. Behind the scenes, an enthusiastic team of students works hard every day to make your university experience as enjoyable and rewarding as possible. We actively represent students and support you academically, for example we provide services such as course materials and study-related assistance.

At the same time, university life is about much more than studying. Throughout the year, Medica organizes a wide range of activities, from lively parties and our annual gala to cultural events, sports competitions, and much more. Whatever your interests may be, there is something for everyone.

Allow me to briefly introduce myself. My name is Jakobien, and I am currently studying Biomedical Sciences. This will be my third year as a member of the Medica presidium, and I am honored to serve as Praeses for the 2026-2027 academic year.

As Praeses, I represent Medica both within and outside the student community and help oversee the daily functioning of our association. Together with the entire presidium, I am looking forward to meeting all of you and making this an unforgettable year. Enjoy the last weeks of your summer break, and hopefully I will see you soon on campus, at one of our events, or simply at Doc's Bar.

See you soon!

Jakobien De Dooy Praeses 2026-2027

Team Onthaal



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Hi everyone

We are “Team Onthaal”, which loosely translates to “Team Welcoming”. We are a team of Medica’s praesidium and our job is to create a warm welcom for all new students at our faculty here in Leuven. That includes all the Belgian first-years in Medicine and Biomedical sciences, but of course also you guys: the international students.

We are here for you to help you experience the best version of student life in Leuven. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us! As you probably know, we have a whatsapp community for all of our international students. This is the place to be if you have any questions or if you want to share something with all international Biomedical Sciences and/or Medicine students.

A lot of activities organised by Medica are focused on our Flemish students, BUT that does not mean that you as an international student are not welcome!

The opposite even! Check out our agenda for this year with some of our activities that are accessible for you! Plus, keep an eye on the whatsapp-chat, since we will update you on interesting events for you this way. We would love to see you there!

Apart from these activities, LOKO will also be organising lots of events for you. Be sure to check those out as well!

We are so excited for the upcoming semester and we hope that you feel the same way!

See you soon!

xoxo Team Onthaal



MEDICA

WHAT IS IT?

Medica is the Leuven student association for Medicine and Biomedical Sciences students at the Faculty of Medicine of KU Leuven.

We are a team of dedicated students who aim to provide you with an unforgettable student experience in various ways and on different levels.



MEDICA

A FEW FUN FACTS!

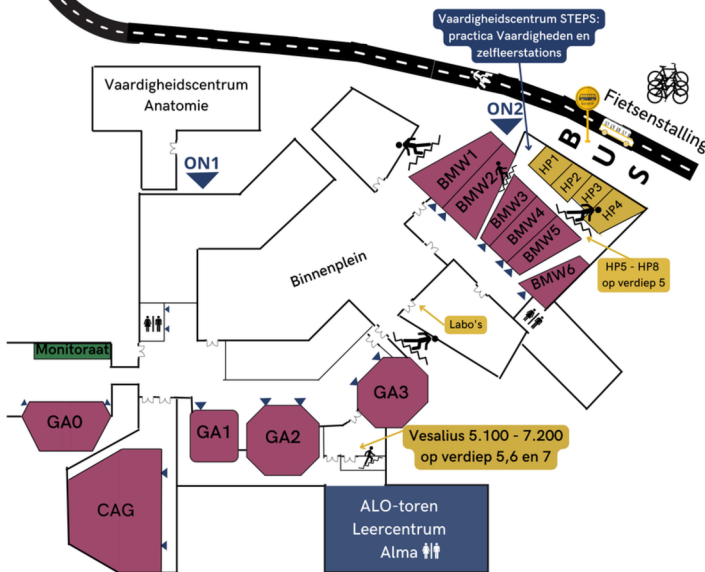
Medica is a faculty association, not a student club. We are connected to the faculty and offer a wide range of different activities.

Medica is the student association that represents the largest number of students in Leuven! Every Leuven student in Biomedical Sciences or Medicine is welcome to join our activities.

Medica is an association for students, run by students! The praesidium therefore consists of volunteers who are students themselves.

HOW TO NOT GET LOST ON CAMPUS

Campus Gasthuisberg



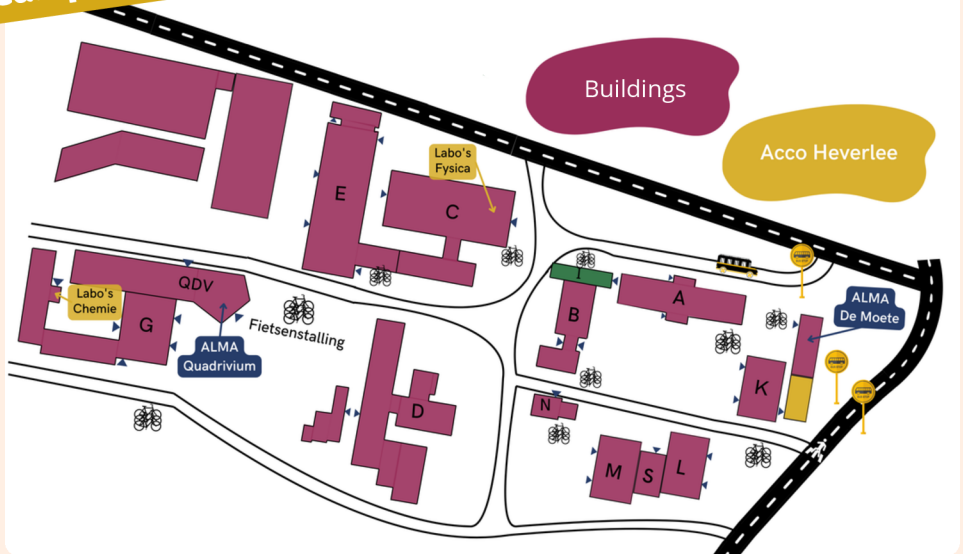
Auditorium

Smaller rooms

ALO TOWER
Library: level 4
Alma: level 2
ALO: level 5/7
ICT-rooms: level 6

- **Auditoria:** These are the lecture halls where most classes take place. They are large spaces that can accommodate several hundred students.
- **Smaller rooms:** These rooms are also used for teaching but are intended for smaller groups, such as tutorials or practice sessions ("oefenzittingen").
- **ALO Tower:** Located at Gasthuisberg, this tower serves multiple purposes. The library, called Désiré Collen, is on level 4 (ground level). On level 2, you'll find Alma, the student restaurant, which offers sandwiches as well as affordable hot meals. Study rooms are available on levels 5 and 7, and there is an ICT-room on level 6.

Campus Arenberg



- **Alma:** There are two student restaurants on campus. Alma Quadrivium and Alma De Moete, but they don't serve hot meals. These are for sandwiches and quick snacks.
- **Acco Heverlee:** A shop on the campus where you can buy textbooks, course materials, stationery and other study supplies.
- **Quadrivium:** The main building on the campus. It contains the campus's largest lecture hall, several smaller classrooms across multiple floors used for tutorials and practice sessions, laboratories and an Alma restaurant.
- **Buildings A, B, C...:** These buildings contain smaller lecture halls and classrooms used for regular classes, tutorials and practice sessions, usually with smaller groups of students.
- **Bus stops:** Several bus stops are located around the campus, providing connections to Leuven railway station and the city centre.

HOW TO

RESERVE A STUDY SEAT

1. Scan this QR-code or go to: <https://bib.kuleuven.be/faciliteiten/reserveren>
2. Click on "make a reservation"
3. Log in with your KU Leuven account (like on Toledo)
4. Choose "Leuven", Choose "Seat", Choose "Study place"
5. Choose the library you want to study at. For Campus Gasthuisberg this is: "2Bergen Learning Centre Désiré Collen"
6. Choose "random seat" to get a random seat assigned or if you want to pick out your seat
7. Click the date you want to reserve it, choose the starting hour of your booking and the duration
8. Click "create reservation" and accept the terms and conditions and click on "reserve now"
9. At the start of your booking scan the QR-code on your place to log-in.

ATTENTION: you only have a 30 minut window to confirm your reservation!



HOW TO

GET TO CLASS LIKE A PRO

By bike

- **Gasthuisberg:** There is a bycycle shed on the other side of the road. You can cross the street by using the staircase.
- **Arenberg:** There are multiple sheds all over campus

By public transportation

- **Gasthuisberg:** Bus line 43 stops right in front of the Onderwijs en Navorsing 2 building at the stop “Leuven Gasthuisberg Campus.” You can also take other buses towards the hospital and walk up the hill to the campus, as several bus lines serve the area.
- **Arenberg:** Bus lines 2, 12, and 520 serve the campus. They are slightly less convenient, as you will need to walk for a few minutes from the bus stop to reach your destination.

The easiest way to plan your journey is by using the De Lijn app, the official app of the local bus company, which provides real-time schedules and route planning.

EVENTS

Being a student is of course about more than just attending classes! From parties to sports events and cultural evenings, Medica organizes a wide variety of activities. Here are a few you definitely don't want to miss!



24 urenloop

(24 hour run)

This is the sports-highlight of the year. During this yearly event, students from different faculties compete in a relay race around Leuven, where teams run for 24 hours straight. Besides the race, the city comes alive with music, parties, and activities organized by student associations. It is a unique tradition that brings together students, locals, and international students for a day and night of sports and celebration. The HMV (Hoogmedisch Verbond) competes every year for 5th place against Industria by running as many laps as possible within 24 hours. Run a lap yourself or come cheer us on—your support makes a difference!

Can you run **530 metres in 1 min 35 or less**? Then contact Team Sport via sport@medica.be and maybe run along!



Gala

The perfect occasion to pull out your finest clothes and enjoy an evening full of style and atmosphere. Think of a beautiful location, a packed dance floor, delicious drinks, and of course all your friends and fellow students dressed in their best outfits.





Thursday parties

Do you like to party? Lots of students in Leuven do! In Leuven most of our students party on thursdays, because that is the night before most students return home. That is why Medica throws a party every thursday at our “fakbar”: **Doc’s Bar**. You have to come and party with us!

Ski/Culture trip

Even during the lecture-free week and Easter holidays, Medica stays active! Join one of their ski trips or cultural trips and discover a new part of the world. It is the perfect opportunity to explore, have fun, and get to know your (new) friends even better.



Symposium and biomedical congress

Interested in the medical and biomedical world beyond the lecture hall? The Medica Symposium and Biomedical Congress offer the opportunity to connect with experts, discover groundbreaking research, and explore current topics in healthcare. Expand your knowledge and get inspired by these engaging events.





Aperitifief concert

An enjoyable evening filled with music, dance, and theatre. Show your creative talents on stage or simply enjoy the performances from the audience! The Golden Chalk Awards (awards for professors) are also presented during this evening, making it an event you definitely do not want to miss.

Cantus culture

A cantus is a traditional Belgian student event that combines singing, friendship, and student traditions. It is a unique part of Belgian student culture and a great way to connect with fellow students. During a cantus, students sit together at long tables, usually with a 'codex' or songbook in front of them, and sing traditional student songs. The evening is guided by a senior or a cantor, they make sure the songs, traditions, and rules of the evening are followed. Students share stories, laugh together, and get to know each other in a relaxed atmosphere. For international students, a cantus can be a great opportunity to experience an important part of Belgian student culture. You do not need to know all the songs beforehand—the atmosphere and participation are what matter most. It is a memorable way to meet new people, make friends, and feel more connected to student life in Leuven.

Please note: Alcohol is often part of a cantus, but drinking is always optional. You can fully participate and enjoy the experience without drinking alcohol.



FAKBAR

A ‘fakbar’ (short for faculteitsbar/ faculty bar) is a student bar linked to a specific faculty or student association. It is run by students and mainly aimed at other students, which is why drinks are usually cheaper and the atmosphere is more social and less anonymous than a regular bar.

Doc's Bar

Doc's bar is the faculty bar for medical and biomedical students in Leuven. It is run by Medica and serves as a central meeting place for students from Campus Gasthuisberg to relax after classes. The bar offers a friendly and informal atmosphere where it is easy to meet fellow students, catch up with friends, or unwind after a long day of lectures or practical sessions. Because it is student-run, prices are kept affordable, making it a very accessible place to socialize on a regular basis.



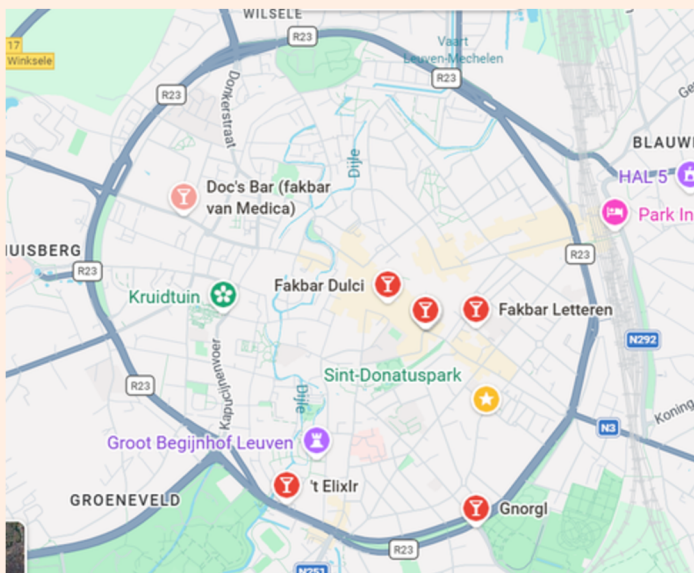
In addition to being a casual hangout spot, Doc's Bar regularly hosts events specifically tailored to students in the health sciences. These can include themed evenings, small parties, or activities organized by Medica and the faculty circle. Be sure to note Brusselsestraat 246, because you'll undoubtedly end up here many times!

Other Fakbars

Besides Doc's Bar, there are many other fakbars in Leuven that are linked to different student associations, each representing a specific faculty or field of study. While these bars are often closely connected to their own group of students, it is important to know that they are generally open and accessible to all students, regardless of what or where you study. Exploring different fakbars is a big part of student life in Leuven. Each fakbar has its own unique atmosphere, music style, traditions, and regular visitors. Some are known for their lively parties, others for a more relaxed and social vibe.

Note: You might be asked to show your student card, so always take this with you if you plan on exploring Leuven!

On this map you can find some of the more popular bars: Dulci, Gnorgl, 't ElixIr, fakbar Letteren and the Howly trinity (existing of Recup, HDR and politika kaffee)



HOTSPOTS

PLACES TO BE IN LEUVEN



Abdij van het park

Just a stone's throw from the city center, you can immediately step into peace and greenery here. The Park Abbey is perfect for a lap around the pond for the sporty ones among us. For those who are a bit less athletic, it's also ideal for a leisurely walk or simply enjoying an ice cream from the vending machine.

Dewerf

A very nice café with a cozy terrace, always bustling with people. You can eat here at very student-friendly prices, but above all, you shouldn't miss the desserts! You can also get these desserts from their dessert vending machine, perfect for a midnight snack after an evening at the Oude Markt or as a break during studying.



Ladeuze plein

Ladeuzeplein is one of the most famous spots in Leuven, mainly thanks to the impressive University Library that proudly towers over it. Inside, you can study in a beautiful historic setting, while outside the square regularly buzzes with activities: from book fairs and concerts to Leuven Jazz and even food truck festivals.





Oude markt

During the day, you can enjoy a cozy terrace here, but it really comes alive at night. It's the perfect place to go out. With so many different cafés and bars, there's something for everyone—the nickname 'the longest bar in the world' is well deserved.

Kruidentuin

The Kruidtuin in Leuven is Belgium's oldest botanical garden and a true hidden gem in the heart of the city. You'll find hundreds of plant and tree species, a beautiful greenhouse, and cozy walking paths that help you completely unwind. It's a popular spot for students to relax, read a book, or simply escape the hustle and bustle.



Quetzal

For the ultimate sweet tooth among us: Quetzal is a true paradise for chocolate lovers. Everything here revolves around chocolate—hot chocolate in every flavor, divine brownies, and much more. Perfect for treating yourself after a tough exam day or just because—any reason is a good excuse to stop by!

Muntstraat en Tiensestraat

These two streets form the main food hotspots in Leuven. Located in the city centre, they offer a wide variety of international cuisines at student-friendly prices. They are especially popular among international students, as you can find both familiar dishes and new flavors, making them perfect for quick meals, dinners with friends, or exploring different cultures through food.

ESSENTIALS

We know that moving to a new country can feel a bit overwhelming. There's a lot to figure out, and it's not always easy at first. That's why we've put together a list of things every student in Leuven should have.

- ☐ Study books (you can get these on our webshop)
- ☐ A good going out outfit (note: Belgium is very casual)
- ☐ Codex or Leuven's Liedboek (used at cantussen)
- ☐ A bike and a good lock on it
- ☐ De Lijn app (for public transportation)
- ☐ Student ID
- ☐ Quivr app (An app where you can check the occupancy rate of libraries, find the meal of the day at Alma, view your lecture schedule, and access other useful student information all in one place)

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MEET NEW FRIENDS AND STAY UP TO DATE
WITH OUR EVENTS!



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