

Bachelor's programme Psychology

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

GUIDE FOR FIRST-YEARS STUDENTS

AN OVERVIEW OF IMPORTANT INFORMATION
TO START YOUR STUDY WELL PREPARED



Welcome to the Psychology programme at the Faculty of Behavioural and Movement Sciences (FGB)! You are starting the first year of your Bachelor's programme, so you are probably new to the faculty. We feel it's important that you find your way within the programme and the faculty as soon as possible, so that you feel at home and are fully equipped to perform well during your programme. In this guide, we have summarized important information for you. We wish you good luck and hope you enjoy your study programme!

TYPES OF TUITION

You will gain knowledge about Psychology in various ways. During the lectures, the lecturers discuss the key points of the course literature and provide additional insight based on examples and recent research. In addition, you work on challenging assignments in smaller groups during interactive tutorials. These assignments help you process the literature in the best possible manner and help you prepare for (interim) examinations and final assignments. Initially, we help you 'learn how to study' by providing structured assignments, which you complete either individually or in groups prior to the tutorial. These assignments are available via Canvas (the digital learning environment). During the course of your education, the assignments you receive will become less structured and you will learn how to manage your own learning process. In this way, we ensure that, even after graduation, you are capable of continuing your personal development.

During each period, you will take a content-related course and a methodology- or skills-related course. Periods 1, 2, 4 and 5 last eight weeks and periods 3 and 6 last four weeks. In the [study guide](#), you can see the courses you will take and the number of credits (EC) awarded. A convenient schedule outlining

the entire programme of the bachelor Psychology can also be found in the [study guide](#).

Fellow students and language

Within the English track, all lectures and workgroups are in English and you are expected to converse in English during the courses. Your fellow students will come from different countries around the world, During content-related courses, Dutch students from the standard track will join you, but your workgroups will always take place with students from the English track.

Attendance obligation

The tutorials can only be successful if all students prepare properly, are present, arrive on time and participate actively. This is why tutorial attendance is compulsory for all types of courses. If you are present during all the meetings, if you are well prepared and participate actively, you will also be adequately prepared for the exam and/or the final assignment.

If you cannot be present due to circumstances, let your tutor know before the start of the session. He or she can then assess whether further action is necessary.

Make sure that you are on time. When you are frequently late, this will be considered as being absent for at least one session. Always read the

course manual carefully beforehand, to know what is expected of you in preparation for the tutorial.

If your teacher or tutor considers your input to the tutorials to be insufficient, he or she will discuss this with you.

If your input does not improve, you might fail the attendance requirement.

If you have been present for less than 80% of the tutorials for a course, you fail to meet the attendance requirement. This means you cannot participate in the corresponding assignment and/or examination, and will not be able to complete the course that year. You must then follow the course again in the following year and retake the corresponding assignment(s) and/or examination.

In case of exceptional personal circumstances, as defined in the Education and Examination Regulations (OER) of your programme, the examination board may grant exceptions. The OER can be found [in the study guide](#) of your programme. More information about the OER can be found further on in this student guide.

Assessment

By passing the examinations and final assignments, you obtain the credits that apply to the courses in question. In one year you can obtain 60 EC (credits).

If you get an unsatisfactory mark for a final assignment or exam, you will get a one-time chance to do a resit for the test or assignment. If you do not obtain a passing grade then, you will have to retake the course again the following year.

This may mean that you will also have to redo the partial examinations of the content-based courses. Check the [study guide](#) of your programme and the course manual of your course for details on the assessment for your courses.

Make sure that you pass as many courses as possible, and only need to use a resit in case of special circumstances. If you fail multiple courses, the risk of falling behind is quite serious. After all, the second year is also demanding, and you will need to devote all your efforts to the new courses.

Moreover, if you fail too many courses you may not meet the requirements of the Binding Study Advice (BSA) in order to continue your studies. More information about the Binding Study Advice can be found further in this student manual.

Language test

All first-year students at VU Amsterdam take a compulsory Dutch or English language test in September. The English language test is mandatory for students following the English track in Psychology. Taking the language test is a requirement for completing the *Introduction to Psychology* course. The language test is indicative. If you score low on this test, you are required to follow an English language catch-up course, including a final test.

Acting as human test subjects

All Psychology students must participate in ten hours of research during the first academic year. Participation is a prerequisite for obtaining your grade for the course Psychological Communication Skills 1.

Some experiments test basic perception, while others test memory or social interactions. Acting as a human test subject gives you an opportunity to experience what is to be a research participant and learn more about the way such research is conducted.

INFORMATION SERVICES INFORMATION

VUnet

[VUnet](#) is VU Amsterdam's digital portal.

Whether you wish to search for information, or enroll for additional courses or resits, or view your transcript of records: everything can be done on VUnet. As soon as you have received your login information and completed your application process, you can get started on this portal. On VUnet, you can also access news reports issued by the faculty, submit requests to the examination board, view course evaluations, and make an appointment with the study advisor.

Make sure you consult VUnet regularly during your programme, so that you do not miss out on any important information.

VUnet ID

The VUnet ID consists of your username and password. This gives you access to all kinds of digital services such as your student email account, [VUnet](#) and Canvas.

Everything together on Canvas

The programme has a [Canvas course](#) where all relevant information and news items are published. Here you can also find the presentations for information days, information about the learning tracks in year 3, and the Master's programmes at the VU. The programme considers the Canvas course, in addition to e-mail and VUnet, as an official communication channel. Make sure you accept the invitation as soon as possible, otherwise you will miss out on all kinds of relevant information about the course.

VU Student Desk

The [Student Desk](#) can be found in the central hall of the VU Amsterdam main building. You can contact the Central Student Desk with questions about signing up for courses, interim examinations and resits, your transcript of

records, registering and deregistering for the programme, tuition fees, and the submission of official documents. If needed, they will refer you to the faculty's [Education Office](#).

GETTING STARTED

You must enroll for every course through VUnet. However, first-year students who are just getting started do not need to register for the courses in the first period starting in September. We will make sure you are enrolled for these courses.

Only for very urgent reasons a change of workgroups can be implemented. A motivated request for a change in workgroups can be submitted to the [Education Office](#) of the faculty. After you have enrolled for the course, you are automatically registered for the exam. For re-examinations you have to enroll yourself again!

NOTE: It is very important to sign up for courses, examinations and resits on time, if you do not do this you will not be allowed to take part in the course!

The registration period for courses closes three weeks before the start of the teaching period, with the exception of education that starts in period 1. For period 1, you can register for the courses up to the first week of this teaching period. As stated before, as a first-year student you will be automatically enrolled for courses in period 1. For resits you can enroll up to two weeks before the exam date.

On [VUnet](#) you will find a complete overview of the registration periods for the academic year 2019-2020.

Schedule

You can find your personal schedule for all courses for which you are registered by logging in at <https://rooster.vu.nl/schedule>. On average you will have 12 hours of class per week at the VU, spread out between Monday to Friday.

In addition, you are expected to read the course literature and work on your assignments at home or at the university. In general, no classes are planned during interim examination weeks.

Keep in mind that even if you are not at the university, you should still spend a large amount of time on your studies. The study guide and course guides indicate the amount of self-study we expect from you.

Basically you will spend around 40 hours a week on your study programme.

Your schedule may at first be somewhat hard to read. You can find a small legend of the abbreviations below:

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TIMETABLE

L	Lecture
S	Tutorial (methodology-related course)
T	Tutorial (content-related course)
TR	Training (skills-related course)
E	Interim examination
MB	Main building
TR	Transitorium
IN	Initium
BV	BelleVUe
EH	Examination hall

Also see the campus map on the last page

Canvas

At VU Amsterdam, we use the Canvas digital learning environment. For each course taught at the university, a corresponding course is created on Canvas, to which you have automatic access if you are enrolled for that course. Information on Canvas includes the course manual for the course and sample interim examination questions. Please make sure to read the course manual at the start of the course as it will contain information on the requirements and deadlines you need to meet to pass the course.

The lecturer keeps you informed during the progress of the course via Canvas and occasionally you may also have to use it to submit assignments. In addition, after a lecture, teachers often place the lecture slides on Canvas, so that you can re-read them at home.

Study guide

The [study guide](#) contains information about the course content, forms of assessment and the required literature. Make sure you buy the books for one period at a time, since the course literature may be modified before the start of a course. The books are for sale in the [VU Bookshop](#) (VU Amsterdam main building) or may be ordered online. You can also purchase the books through the student association [VSPVU](#). You can get a discount on the books if you are a member. More information about the VSPVU student association can be found further on in this student guide.

Make sure that you have all course materials at your disposal at the start of your course, so you can learn optimally from the lectures and tutorials.

Education and Examination Regulations (OER)

The examination programme and all academic regulations are officially laid down in the OER. The OER also specifies the validity period of marks received and rules related to the Binding Study Advice, study progress and guidance. The OER is binding. In case of any differences between the OER and the study guide, the regulations as described in the OER shall prevail. As a student, you are expected to be aware of the contents of the OER. You can find the OER in de [study guide](#) of your programme.

RESPECT FOR EACH OTHER

We feel it is very important that everyone shows respect for each other in behavior and communication. Make sure you are aware of the code of good conduct on the canvas site and follow the guidelines. In this way we create an educational environment in which everyone feels comfortable.

ACHIEVE YOUR POTENTIAL

There are several ways in which you can get something extra out of your studies, simply because you like to go that extra mile or just because you want to increase your job opportunities.

Cum Laude

If you get high grades and do not need resits, you may be awarded the class 'Cum Laude' or 'with distinction' upon graduation. Read the Rules and Guidelines of the Examination Board on the conditions for obtaining this award.

Honours Programme

VU University Amsterdam offers talented and motivated students the opportunity to gain more in-depth knowledge, and to look beyond the limits of their own field of study. The 'Honours Programme' is a programme that runs next to the bachelor programme from the second semester of the first academic year. If you have successfully completed the Honours Programme (30 credits), you will receive a special mention on your degree certificate. Read more about the Honours Programme on [VUnet](#).

Studying abroad

During your studies at the VU you will be offered the opportunity to study abroad. As an exchange student you spend a semester at a partner university of VU University Amsterdam. A unique academic challenge, where you live,

study and stay in a (different) international environment. A guaranteed boost for career opportunities and personal development. In short, an unforgettable experience during your studies! Read more about studying abroad at [VUnet](#).

Committees

There are various possibilities to gain experience within a committee. Think of the study programme committee, the Faculty student council or one of the committees within a study or student association. Sometimes there are special arrangements when you are involved with committee work, so that you have more opportunity within your studies to perform committee work. For more information, see [VUnet](#).

STUDY ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

Academic advisor

The academic advisors can assist you during your studies with all kinds of things, such as the preparation of a study plan and help with personal or study-related problems. If needed, the academic advisors may refer you to the [student psychological counsellors](#) or [student counsellor](#). The academic advisors have open consultation hours from Monday to Thursday, 12:45 to 1:30 p.m., in room H637 of the Medical Faculty. Contact: studieadvies.fgb@vu.nl or make an appointment through [VUnet](#).

Binding Study Advice (BSA)

In the first year, you must earn at least 42 of the 60 EC in order to continue the programme. Of course, it is even better for you if you can earn all the credits in one go and not have any study backlog. Several times during the first year, you will receive interim advice from the study advisor about your study progress. If things do not go well from the start, make an appointment with one of the academic

advisors through [VUnet](#).

Mentor

In the first year you get assigned a mentor. He or she is usually the tutor for one of your workgroups, and is therefore easily approachable. Your mentor will sit down with you at the start of the year, and check if there are special circumstances that need to be taken into account. He/she will also keep an eye on your study progress during the year and discuss this with you personally.

Studying with a disability

A disability such as a chronic disease, dyslexia or a psychological impairment need not stand in the way of completing your studies successfully. If you require help with your studies because of your disability, you can approach different people for assistance. First of all, you can contact the academic advisors. They can arrange for facilities such as an enlarged version of interim examination papers or advice regarding the BSA. The [student counsellor](#) can also give you information on how to obtain financial support for study delays. SCHIB (Studenten Contact Hulp en Informatie bij Beperkingen), an organisation that helps students with disabilities, can guide you with regard to the centralised facilities and can link you to a 'study buddy'.

Study success

To increase the chances of accomplishing your studies with success, we offer the possibility to take part in several courses or to study in [study groups](#). You can also be linked to a [study partner](#). Regular short sessions are offered with useful study tips. These are announced on Canvas.

Esther Eustace is the study success coordinator at FGB. Starting from the introductory lecture prior to the program, during the programme and afterwards (for alumni) you can contact her

if you want advice on how to improve your study success or if you have suggestions on how we can improve study success. You can contact Esther by e-mail at studiesucces.fgb@vu.nl.

Bachelor coordinator

The bachelor coordinator supervises the tutors and deals with the practical aspects of the work- or tutorgroups, such as the timetable and the assignment of the tutors to the workgroups. If you have a problem with your tutor that you cannot solve with him/her yourself, please contact the bachelor coordinator, Lisa Emmerik by e-mail: bpsy-coordinator.fgb@vu.nl.

Programme director

The programme director (dr. Reinout de Vries) is responsible for the overall quality of the bachelor programme Psychology. He receives a lot of information from the teachers, committees, bachelor coordinator, FSR and other involved parties. You can contact him in case of issues with teachers or the bachelor coordinator, when you cannot solve this together, or more overall comments regarding the programme.

Examination Board

The [examination board](#) is responsible for the quality of the examinations and diplomas. If you think that you qualify for exemption for a course or several courses based on your previous education, you can apply to the Examination Board (do this as soon as possible) through [VUnet](#). You can also check [VUnet](#) for other questions and requests to the Examination Board.

Programme committee

The programme committee consists of lecturers and students who jointly evaluate the education, and provide advice to the faculty board and the programme director. For more information about the programme committee, see [Vunet](#). Contact: OLC.bachelors.fgb@vu.nl

YOUR OPINION MATTERS

We want to help you reach your full potential, and will work hard to achieve just that. However, in order to be able to offer high-quality education and study advice, we definitely need your feedback! You help determine the quality of the programme by telling us what you like and what we can improve. You can provide us with feedback in various ways. If you have comments about your course, please discuss this with your tutor or lecturer. They hold a weekly meeting with the other lecturers and the course coordinator. During this meeting, possible improvements to be made are discussed. At the end of each course, you will also receive a digital evaluation form. Please complete this, even if you do not have any suggestions for the course. Based on the results of these evaluations, we will look into whether the course needs to be modified.

NSE

Every year, the study programmes in the Netherlands are evaluated through a large-scale survey among students. The more students complete this survey, the more reliable the information obtained. The results of this survey are used to make valuable improvements to your education.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND EMAIL

The VU considers e-mail, Canvas and VUnet as official communication channels. You should therefore check VUnet and Canvas on a regular basis and check your VU mailbox or the e-mail address you provided in Studielink as your communication address, otherwise you will miss out on all kinds of relevant information about your study programme. In addition, the faculty has a [Facebook page](#) and [Twitter](#) account, where we post information relevant for faculty students.

STUDENT FACILITIES STUDENT

Wireless network

Students can use the Campusnet wireless network by logging on with their VUnet ID. This network allows you to access the Internet. The most convenient method for configuring the wireless network is through www.vu.nl/draadloos.

Studyspot

Studyspot is an app available on the VUnet home page which enables students to find free study places at the VU Amsterdam campus. If you are looking for a quiet place to study or a place to meet with your working group, Studyspot is a useful tool. Read more about Studyspot on [VUnet](#).

SURFspot

You can purchase discounted software and hardware for home use through the non-profit online shop SURFspot.nl, such as Microsoft packages, multimedia software and mathematical and statistical software (SPSS).

VU Sports Centre

The VU Sports Centre plays host to a variety of sports. Anyone can become a member, but as a VU Amsterdam student, you get a discount. In addition, as a student, you can try out the sports centre for eight consecutive days for only € 10. This € 10 will be deducted from your membership fee if you decide to become a member. [Read more](#) about the VU Sports Centre.

STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS

Faculty student council (FSR)

The FSR is a student representation body consisting of six students from various programmes at the Faculty of Behavioural and Human Movement Sciences. The FSR's purpose is to promote the interests of the students. This

means that students can let their voices be heard through the FSR and participate in decision-making regarding the faculty. To ensure this, the FSR is present at meetings of the faculty board. Moreover, input from students is considered very important. Based on this input, we can make the biggest difference for? Or to? our students. Contact the FSR by sending an email to fsr.fgb@vu.nl or by leaving a message on the [Facebook page](#)

VSPVU

The Association for Students Psychology and Pedagogy at the VU (VSPVU) is the study association of the studies Psychology, Pedagogical Sciences and University PABO at VU Amsterdam. The VSPVU offers study materials, including study books with membership

discounts. In addition, the study association organizes many activities, from lectures and excursions to parties, and they are involved in the VU Introduction Days.

On [the website](#) you can read more about the activities of the VSPVU and, if you want, become a member.

On the general Psychology Canvas site you can read more about additional associations that may be of interest to you as a student.

PLATTEGROND VU CAMPUS EN VU MEDISCH CENTRUM

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