

Guidelines for tuition fees - international students

Approved by the VUC Director: 02.10.2024

Students who are citizens of countries outside the EU/EEA and Switzerland must pay tuition fees to Volda University College (VUC) if they do not qualify for an exemption.

This document contains additional information on payment, exemption and reimbursement of tuition fees for international students at VUC.

1. Payment of tuition fees and semester fees

Students who are citizens of countries outside the EU/EEA and Switzerland must pay tuition fees to VUC if they do not meet one of the requirements for exemption (see 2.2.-2.12.).

In addition to tuition fees, international degree students must also pay a semester registration fee to VUC in the same way as Norwegian citizens.

Incoming exchange students from partner universities are exempt from paying tuition fees. Exchange students are also exempt from paying the semester fee to VUC because they pay semester fees to their home institution during the exchange stay.

Incoming students who are not nominated by one of VUC's partner universities (so-called *Free Movers*) must pay tuition fees if they do not meet one of the requirements for exemption (see 2.2.-2.12.).

1.1. Period for tuition payments

International students on year courses or degree programs must normally pay tuition fees for an entire academic year at a time.

Exceptions can be made for international students who do not need a study permit from the Norwegian Immigration Authorities (UDI) to study in Norway. Such students may request to pay the tuition fees per semester.

An exception can also be made for incoming students from non-partner universities ("Free Movers") who must pay tuition fees for either a semester or a year depending on how long they will study at VUC.

Tuition fees for one semester is calculated as 50% of the tuition fees for an academic year.

The tuition fees for an academic year are meant to cover a year of full-time studies (60 ECTS credits). International students enrolled in part-time programmes, who are registered for 30 ECTS or less for the entire academic year, can pay 50% of the yearly tuition fee even if they are students for an entire academic year.

It is not possible to pay the tuition fee in instalments.

1.2. Tuition fee in cases of leave of absence and student exchange

Students who are granted a leave of absence for an entire academic year do not need to pay tuition fees for this academic year. If the student is granted a leave for one semester, the student can request to have the tuition fee waived for the semester in which they are on leave.

Students who have paid tuition fees and then been granted a leave of absence from VUC can apply for a refund of the tuition fees paid. See point 3. for deadlines and procedures for refund of paid tuition fees.

Students who go on exchange abroad must still pay tuition fees to VUC for the semester or academic year in which they are on exchange/study abroad.

Students who cancel their studies at VUC will only receive a refund of the tuition fees paid if they apply within the given deadlines (see point 3).

1.3. Tuition fees for extension of studies and transfer of credits

Students do not need to pay tuition fees for a new semester if they are only to take a re-sit examination or to submit their Master's thesis for a second time. That is, as long as the student does not register for new courses and/or sit in classes for the extra semester.

Students who are legally prevented from taking the ordinary exam, can register for a re-sit examination without paying a further tuition fees.

Students do not need to pay tuition fees to re-sit an exam they have previously failed, as long as the student does not register for new courses or attend classes in the extra semester.

Students do not need to pay tuition fees to transfer courses/credits from other institutions into their degree programme at VUC.

1.4. Procedures for paying the tuition fees

VUC will send out an invoice for the student to pay the tuition fees. The invoice will show the amount owed, the study program and what year/semester the payment applies to. The deadline for payment will also appear on the invoice and is normally set to a date prior to the start of the semester/study year.

Invoices for new international students are sent out after the students have accepted their offer of admission and confirmed that they do not apply for an exemption from paying the fees.

For students in the second or third year of their degree programme, the invoice to pay tuition fees will be sent out at the start of the new academic year or semester, given that the student does not apply for, and is granted, an exemption from paying fees.

The invoice for tuition fees can be paid from an account other than the student's own bank account. If so, it is extra important that the payment is marked with the KID number (Customer Identification Number) and the student's name to ensure that the payment is registered on the right student.

1.5. Consequences of delayed payment

Students who do not pay the tuition fee by the given deadline will receive a reminder by e-mail that they will lose their right to study at VUC if they do not pay.

If the student responds to the reminder, VUC may give a new individual deadline for paying the tuition fees.

If the student does not respond to the reminder, the student may lose the place of study at VUC.

1.6. Calculation of tuition fees

The tuition fee is calculated depending on the study program the student is enrolled in. The cost of the various study programs at VUC will vary from year to year. The price is announced on the website: <https://www.hivolda.no/en/international/tuition-fees-non-eueea-students>

Tuition fees will remain relatively stable over time but may be incrementally increased to compensate for inflation. For example, a student may be charged NOK 75,000. for the first year of a bachelor's degree, NOK 78,000. for the second year, and NOK 80,000. for the third year.

International students who are enrolled in multiple study programmes at the same time will be charged tuition fees according to the study programme that has the highest fee.

VUC does not offer any tuition fee waivers, scholarships or grants for international students.

1.7. Payment of tuition fees

Students pay the tuition fee based on an invoice issued by VUC.

Since the invoice is often paid from foreign bank accounts, the transfer may not exactly match the sum in Norwegian kroner. Students who pay too little in NOK will be prompted for further payment. Students who pay too much in NOK will have the excess funds refunded. It is possible that excess amount returned from VUC will be slightly reduced due to currency exchange rates and banking fees.

1.8. Confirmation of paid tuition fees

Volda University College will issue new international students a *Confirmation Letter* stating the amount of paid tuition fees. The students may thereafter upload this confirmation to the Norwegian Immigration Authorities (UDI) to complete the application for a student residence permit.

International students in their second or third year of their degree program can also request such a *Confirmation Letter* from VUC.

2. Exemption from paying tuition fees

The Norwegian government has decided that international students will be exempt from paying tuition fees if they meet one or more set requirements. See detailed information about these requirements in sections 2.2.-2.12.

The students must themselves check if they meet one or more of the requirements for exemption. VUC is not responsible for checking whether a student meets the requirements for exemption at any given time.

VUC will inform new international students about the possibility of applying for exemption from tuition fees in an online form. Students must upload necessary documentation to VUC to be assessed for exemption.

Students who have paid tuition fees, and then later find out that they meet one of the requirements for exemption, will only be refunded if they apply within the given deadlines. The deadline for applying for an exemption is September 1st for the autumn semester/academic year and February 1st for the spring semester.

In special cases, the Director of Studies can decide that students will be exempted from tuition fees even if an application is made after the deadline.

Students who submit forged or incorrect documents in an application for exemption from tuition fees may be reported to the police.

2.1. Temporary exemption from paying tuition fees

Students who do not meet the requirements for exemption (see 2.2. - 2.12.) when admitted to VUC, but who expect to do so before the start of their studies, can request a temporary exemption from tuition fees. This can be relevant if the student for example plan to marry a Norwegian citizen in the near future (2.9.) or expect to be awarded a residence permit in Norway which gives grounds for exemption (2.5.-2.8.).

For a temporary exemption from tuition fees, the student must contact VUC before the payment deadline for the tuition fees and obtain an individual agreement. VUC will request the submission of relevant documentation according to information in sections 2.2. - 2.12.

The deadline for applying for a temporary exemption is 1 September for the autumn semester/entire academic year and 1 February for the spring semester.

In special cases, the director of studies can grant students a temporary exemption from paying tuition fees even after the deadline.

2.2. Exemption for citizens of EU/EEA-countries and Switzerland

Students who can document that they are citizens of an EU/EEA country or Switzerland are exempt from paying tuition fees to VUC.

Required documentation:

The student must submit a copy of a valid passport or national ID card from an EU/EEA country or Switzerland.

2.3. Exemption for incoming exchange students

Students who are on exchange from one of VUC's partner institutions abroad (institutions with which VUC has an exchange agreement) do not need to pay tuition fees.

Required documentation:

None. This will be evident from a nomination of the said student from the partner institution abroad.

2.4. Exemption for students who started their studies before August 2023

Students who started their degree studies at VUC before the introduction of tuition fees for international students, i.e. before August 2023, do not need to pay tuition fees as long as they are enrolled in the same study programme. This also applies if the student has had a leave of absence from the said degree programme.

Students who started a study programme before autumn 2023 but who has graduated or changed their enrollment to a new study programme will no longer be exempt from tuition fees on these grounds.

Required documentation:

None. The student enrollment will be evident from VUC's student database (FS).

2.5. Exemption for permanent residence permit

Students who hold a permanent residence permit in Norway are exempt from paying tuition fees to VUC.

Required documentation:

Copy of valid passport/National ID card. Copy of residence card and/or decision letter from UDI or the Police.

2.6. Exemption for protection and asylum in Norway

Students who have been granted the right of residence in Norway on the basis of protection/asylum do not need to pay tuition fees to VUC as long as they hold this type of residence permit in Norway.

Required documentation:

Copy of valid passport/National ID card. Copy of residence card and/or decision letter from UDI or the Police.

2.7. Exemption for residence permit for family immigration

Students who have been awarded a residence permit on the basis of family immigration are exempt from tuition fees at VUC. The person that the student is re-united with in Norway must

either be a Norwegian citizen or a foreign citizen with a residence permit in Norway on other grounds than for studying.

Students who have been granted legal residence on an independent basis due to Section 53 of the Norwegian Immigration Act are also exempt from tuition fees at VUC.

Required documentation:

Copy of valid passport/National ID card. Copy of residence card and/or decision letter from UDI or the Police.

2.8. Exemption for students with residence permit as family members of EU/EEA-citizens in Norway

Students who are family members of an EU/EEA-citizen who already lives and resides in Norway are exempt from paying tuition fees to VUC. The EU/EEA-citizen must have grounds for residence in Norway other than studying.

Required documentation:

Copy of valid passport/National ID card. Copy of residence card and/or decision letter from UDI or the Police. Copy of the registration certificate for the EU/EEA-citizen residing in Norway.

2.9. Exemption for students who are married to a Norwegian citizen

Students who are married to a Norwegian citizen do not need to pay tuition fees to HVO. This also includes students in *common-law marriages* (in Norwegian “sambuar”) who live together, and have joint children, with the Norwegian citizen.

Required documentation:

Copy of valid passport/ID card for the student and the spouse. Residence card and decision letter from UDI or the police. Copy of marriage certificate (for married people) and residence certificate (for common-law marriages).

2.10. Exemption for students who have worked in Norway for at least 2 years

Persons who have worked full-time in Norway for a continuous period of at least 24 months before becoming a student, and who have lived in Norway and paid tax during this accrual period, do not need to pay tuition fees to VUC. The person in question must have had a residence permit as an employee during this 2-year-period and there cannot be any breaks between the employee-period and the study-period, apart from breaks due to illness or childbirth.

Au-pair work does not count as full-time work in this context.

Required documentation:

Copy of valid passport/ID card. Copy of residence card and decision letter from UDI or the Police. Printout from Tax return, pay slip or other documentation showing 24 months of continuous work and tax returns.

2.11. Exemption for students who have studied in Norway for at least 3 years full-time

Students who have lived and studied in Norway for a minimum of 3 consecutive years and have completed the equivalent of 3 years of full-time study (180 ECTS credits) do not need to pay tuition fees to VUC.

It is a requirement that the student has not received any loans/scholarships from other support schemes in Norway or the Nordic countries (such as Norad, NUFU, NORHED, etc.) during the 3-year period.

There can be no breaks in this 3-year period, except for breaks/absence caused by illness and/or childbirth. Nor can there be any breaks between the 3-year period and the continuing of studies for which the student is exempt from tuition fees, apart from holidays or other lecture-free periods.

Required documentation:

Copy of valid passport/ID card. Copy of residence card and decision letter from UDI or the police. Copy of diploma/transcript from educational institution in Norway.

2.12. Exemption for citizens of the United Kingdom

Students who are citizens of the United Kingdom and who have resided in Norway since before 31 December 2020, are exempt from paying tuition fees to VUC. This due to the transitional arrangement in the EEA agreement which means that citizens from the UK had the right to stay in Norway as EU/EEA citizens until 1 January 2021.

Citizens from Great Britain who came to Norway after 1 January 2021 must pay tuition fees if they do not meet one of the other requirements for exemption.

Required documentation:

Copy of valid passport/ID card. Copy of residence card/decision letter from UDI or the police, possibly registration certificate from UDI/Police.

3. Reimbursement of tuition fees

Students who have paid tuition fees but later decides to apply for a reimbursement, may do so by 1 September for the autumn semester/entire academic year, or 1 February for a refund of tuition fees in the spring semester.

The student must submit a request for a refund before the deadlines mentioned above and to the e-mail address admissions@hivolda.no.

3.1. Acceptable reasons for reimbursement

Reimbursement of tuition fees can take place both in cases where students cancel their place of study, apply for a leave of absence, and/or in cases where students fulfill requirements for exemption after having paid the tuition fees.

Reimbursement of tuition fees can also take place if the student does not receive a residence permit from the UDI or that the study program to which the student has been admitted is cancelled.

Students who have been admitted on the basis of falsified or incorrect documents will not be able to get a refund of paid tuition fees. Students who submit forged or incorrect documents in an application for exemption or refund of tuition fees may be reported to the police.

3.2. Procedure for reimbursement of tuition fees

In the event of a refund of tuition fees, VUC will return the paid amount to the person/account of the original payment.

The amount the student gets refunded may be less than the original payment due to exchange rates and banking fees.

3.3. Deadline for applying for a reimbursement

Students who apply for a refund of paid tuition fees after 1 September (or 1 February for the spring semester) will normally not receive reimbursement.

In cases where VUC has wrongly charged tuition fees from a student, or in other special cases, the Director of Studies will be able to decide that the student shall be reimbursed even after the deadline.

3.4. Reimbursement of part of the tuition fees

Students who have paid tuition fees for the entire academic year, and who do not receive a refund for the autumn semester, can still apply for a refund for the spring semester before 1 February.

4.0. Right of appeal

Decisions on payment, exemptions and reimbursement of tuition fees are to be counted as an administrative decision at VUC and therefore the student has the right to file a complaint in accordance with the *Norwegian Public Administration Act*, paragraphs 28 and 29.

The student must submit an appeal within 3 weeks after the decision was communicated by VUC and/or 3 weeks after one could expect that the student learned about the decision.

The appeal must be sent to admissions@hivolda.no and the student must explain in the complaint why the decision is not correct.

The student will have the right to inspect the documents related to the appeal, cf. sections 18 and 19 of the *Norwegian Public Administration Act*.