

EU Study Abroad Program – May 2-15, 2027

Cost Estimates

All cost estimates below are based on the last few years of the EU Study Abroad Program, but it is important to acknowledge that costs have risen recently. In mid-2026, Belgium increased its value-added tax on short-term accommodations like the one where we stay in Leuven, and airfare costs and exchange rates may increase or decrease depending on numerous factors. In any case, the costs below are as close to an accurate estimate as I can offer, and I have used the Bank of Canada's average 2025 exchange rate data to convert euros to Canadian dollars where needed (€1 = \$1.58).

- **Tuition: \$600** (approximately, based on fees for 2026)
Fees for out-of-province students are roughly \$725, for US-based students \$1950, and for international students \$3300, though there may also be some ancillary fees (we usually try to get these waived). Students from Western should apply through OUAC and register at Windsor as non-degree visiting students with a letter of permission (LOP) from Western for the POLS-4880 class to ensure you are in the class for the Intersession 2027 semester and that the course credit transfers back to Western. We will discuss this at a pre-departure meeting in April to ensure that all Western students going on the trip have successfully negotiated the registration and LOP process.
- **Shared accommodation: \$1,750** (or €79 per night for 14 nights, including breakfast)
Accommodation is at the Irish College in Leuven (www.leuveninstitute.eu), which has spacious and clean accommodation including a desk for each student in the shared rooms. Students in the program stay there every year and love it.
- **Airfare: \$1,300**
This is difficult to anticipate. This figure represents a very rough guess at the average those flying out of Toronto to Brussels paid in 2026. We will share information on airfares in the pre-departure group meetings during the winter 2027 semester. You might be able to find cheaper flights to/from Detroit or to/from other airports "near" Brussels (such as Amsterdam).
- **Meals and personal spending: \$600**
This depends on each student's needs and preferences. A figure of about \$40 per day is entirely realistic if one is frugal and plans ahead. There are many inexpensive cafes and abundant street food opportunities in both Leuven and Brussels, where we have lunch most days. There are also grocery stores near the Irish College and in Brussels that offer relatively inexpensive food options. Students can and often have spent much more depending on their interest in shopping, fancier meals, and, speaking plainly, drinking. Students have often found that several pints or glasses of wine in an evening (or multiple evenings, in a row) will quickly bust their bank. If you want or are

not interested in budgeting, you can easily spend double this amount on food and drink, but that is your choice. Remember that breakfast is covered in the cost of accommodation.

- **Travel within Belgium: \$325**

The cost of a one-way trip on the train between Leuven and Brussels is about \$7 off-peak, and \$11 during peak hours. We go into Brussels most days, one day is spent in Bruges, another in Antwerp, and one each in the towns of Willebroek and Wezemaal. You can purchase discounted tickets for the inter-city trains through the SNCB app or at kiosks in train stations. SNCB, the national train system of Belgium, offers a one-month Train+ membership for under \$10 (€4 or €6, depending on your age) that provides up to 40% discounts on train tickets at certain off-peak times. In 2026, we used this extensively. Within Brussels, you can purchase a reloadable MOBIB card for use on the city's Metro system. In 2026, a 10-trip MOBIB card for the Metro cost €24.90 (about \$40) and a 10-trip refill was about \$30. Not cheap but, per ride, not different from Toronto's TTC system. I do not recommend doing the tap-as-you-go payment system on the Brussels metro because if you forget or cannot tap off, you can end up paying up to \$14 for the day, even if you took the subway once.

***** GRAND TOTAL = \$4575 (approximate) *****

Scholarships

Your university may offer scholarships for which you may be eligible. You are encouraged to check with the international office or student awards and financial aid office of your university. If you or a family member is a member of a civic club such as the Rotary Club or the Kiwanis, or a faith community, you may find that you can receive some support. The Windsor Department of Political Science has also started a Trust Fund to help raise money in support of the program, and I am hopeful that there will be some money there to use in further reducing costs (but do not count on this to be very much at the moment).

Can you find a better study abroad deal?

For purposes of comparison to other similar study abroad programs, it is important to keep in mind that **the costs indicated above represent the *total cost of the experience*** (tuition, accommodation, food, and transportation), not simply what is often, and rather misleadingly, referred to as program fees by many other study abroad programs at Canadian and American universities. I can assure you that unless you find a program that is heavily subsidized by the EU, your university, or by some other sponsor, you will not find a more competitive price for a program that delivers the experience that ours does and that earns credit for a one-semester senior-level undergraduate course. We are able to provide superior value for money by compressing the program into 15 days/14 nights, thus reducing the cost of accommodation which is, alongside airfare, the major component of the overall expense for any study abroad program.