Brief guide to the digital services of the VU – 2019

Introduction

VU students have to work with several digital registration, information and communication services, the most important of which are:

- the study guide, which contains an overview of all study programmes, including course descriptions;
- the student information system, which is used for course and exam registration, the timetable (containing time and location for each course), exam results and related administrative matters;
- the learning management system Canvas;
- the VU mail system;
- the catalogue system of the University Library.

In all this, **VUnet** plays a central role. It is not only the place where you can find much (official) information about the VU and your faculty, but it also functions as a portal site giving access to most of the interactive services. We therefore advise you to use it as the home page for your digital activities at the VU. Via VUnet you can get access to (among other things):

- your grades;
- the courses in which you are enrolled;
- your personal timetable, providing the dates, times and locations of these courses;
- the email messages sent to your VU mail account;
- Canvas announcements for the courses you are following.

Personal matters you can arrange via VUnet are (among other things):

- registration for courses and (re-)examinations;
- selection of specializations and minors;
- requests for special facilities, e.g. related to a disability or a prior education.

In this practical you will be introduced to VUnet and a number of digital systems that are connected with it.

N.B.

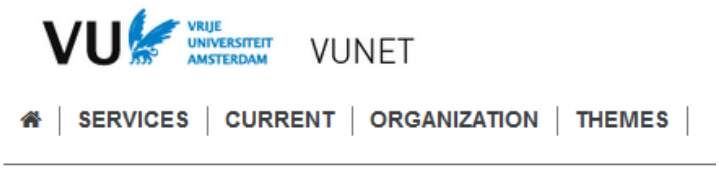
1. If you do not have a VUnet-id (yet), you cannot follow this practical. In that case, please join a fellow student during the faculty's introduction day.
2. Make sure that you have a safe password for your VUnet-id. You can change your password via your profile icon at the top right side of VUnet.
3. You can also follow / finish this practical at home.
4. Many of the digital services also have their own internet address, which you can use for direct access. In the last paragraph of this instruction sheet a number of these URL's are listed.
5. This instruction sheet is available in digital form via the following internet address: https://www2.fgw.vu.nl/documenten/ict/introduction-digital-services.pdf

The practical

VUnet

- Open a web browser and go to https://vunet.vu.nl/
- Log in with your VUnet-id and the accompanying password.

This will lead you to the home page of VUnet. VUnet consists of a number of different components, some of which you will use during this practical. Of the items in the main menu, **Services** is especially relevant, because this is your access point for many manuals, regulations, instructions and other official information.



Messages and announcements

The components ANNOUNCEMENTS and NEWS on VUnet's home page show the most recent announcements and news messages issued by the university, your faculty or your study programme. You can read a message by clicking on it. You can read archived messages via the links "To announcements" en "More news".

The component MY MAIL shows the subjects and senders of the most recent messages in your VU mailbox. By clicking on "To webmail" at the bottom of this component you can enter your VU-mailbox (via webmail).

- Go to the home page of VUnet. Double click on one of the subjects in the component **MY MAIL** and read the message in question. When you are done, close the message window again.
- Click on "To webmail" and check the messages you have received until now.

NOTE that all official messages provided by university, faculty, study programme and lecturers are distributed via one of these channels. It is very important, therefore, that you check this on a regular basis.

Services: manuals, rules, regulations, and much more information

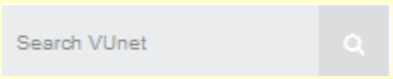
VUnet contains much information that is relevant for the VU and for your Faculty. This is disclosed in two ways: by a directory and by a search machine. We will briefly deal with these two alternatives.

- In VUnet's main menu select the option **SERVICES**.
- Select "Enrollment and re-enrollment" and then "Applying for a new programme". As you can see, this classification leads you to the desired information.

Next you will use the search function to search for information about the digital humanities workbench.

- In the search field enter the terms

  digital humanities

  and click on the magnifying glass.
- Select the search result 'Digital Humanities Workbench'. This will lead you to a page about this subject.
- Use the ★ icon to save this page as a VUnet bookmark.
- Return to VUnet's home page again.

Use the **BOOKMARKS** component on the home page to check your bookmarks.

Study guide

The interactive study guide provides information about the programmes and courses of VU Amsterdam. The information is presented for each academic year, and divided into programme type. N.B. The study guide is not directly available via VUnet.

- Open a new tab in your browser and go to https://vu.nl/en/study-guide/ .
- Select the year *2019-2020* and select your study programme via the option *Bachelor*. Read the course description of the course A*cademic Skills* in your first year.

Course registration

You also use VUnet to register for courses[1]. It is important that you always do this timely.

- Check **in the study guide** which courses you have to follow in period 1.
- Check in the component **COURSE REGISTRATION** at VUnet's home page for which course you have already been registered.
- If you are not registered for all courses of period 1, **do so now**, via the button [**+ Register course**].
  N.B. If you haven't gone through this procedure before, you are advised to read some information about it first, via the question mark icon.

You can also register for your courses in periods 2 and 3. You cannot yet register for the courses in the second semester.

N.B.
1. Rule of thumb at the VU is that students who haven't registered for a course in time are not allowed to follow that course. It is not possible to register after the deadline.
2. The registration deadline for period 1 is 9 September. For all other periods the deadline is 3 weeks before the start of the period. These are strict deadlines.

[1] When you enroll in a course you are automatically enrolled for the course exam as well. If necessary, you can undo this. Note that you will not be automatically registered for e re-examination if you fail an exam!

Timetable

In the component **PERSONAL TIMETABLE** at VUnet's home page your daily personal timetable is shown for the courses you are enrolled in. All changes in the timetable will be visible here, so you are advised to check up on your personal timetable on a regular basis..

The link "To schedule" will lead you to the timetable site of VU University. Here, you can see the complete timetable for a study programme or for a specific course.

- Study the timetable of a course you will follow in the first semester (for example *Academic Skills*).

Academic advisor

This is how you can make an appointment with your academic advisor via Vunet:

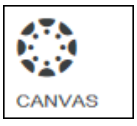
- Select **Services**, then **Advice and contact** and then **Academic advisor**.
- Click on **Appointments** and then on **Online calendar** and sign up as a new user (it is not possible to log on to the online diary with your VUnet-id).
- Check when the next opportunity is to make an appointment.
  NB: Only make an actual appointment if you seriously want one!

Canvas

Canvas, the learning management system of the VU, contains a large number of course websites that lecturers have created to support their courses. Which features a Canvas course offers depends on the way the lecturer has set it up. A Canvas course may contain:

- information about the course, like announcements, the time table and a course manual;
- teaching materials, like PowerPoint-presentations, instruction sheets, a workbook, sources, articles, practice material, and links to (background) information;
- interactive components, like discussion boards, assignments, quizzes and environments for group work;
- feedback to assignments and grades.

Canvas also contains a number of *communities*, for the exchange of information and documentation. These often transcend the course level; for example, a number of study programmes maintain a Canvas community to share information with their students.



You can go to Canvas from VUnet via the quick link on the home page. Canvas can be opened directly in a web browser via the internet address https://canvas.vu.nl

- Go to Canvas and check if you have access to all courses for which you have registered. If the course has been made available by the lecturer it is shown in the **Dashboard** (select the relevant option in the main menu). If a course has not been made available yet, you can find it via the option **Courses** in the main menu.
  N.B. After registration for a course, it usually takes one night before you have access to the accompanying Canvas course.

You can find more information about Canvas at
https://sites.google.com/vu.nl/canvasstudentguide
This document also contains information about the Canvas app for your smartphone / tablet.

University Library VU

The **LIBSEARCH VU** component offers a quick search facility for publications that are available via the University Library VU (UB VU)[2]. Try this with a search for the publication 'Advertising citizenship: An essay on the performative power of consumer culture' by Irene Costera Meijer:

- Click the component **LIBSEARCH VU**, enter the surname of the author and one or two key words from the title (e.g. "***costera advertising citizenship***") and click on the magnifying glass.
- This will lead you to the digital catalogue system of the UB VU, where you will see a page with a number of search results. Although at first sight some of these results do not seem to be very relevant, the page also contains the publication you are looking for (it is even presented more than once).
- Choose one of the hits that have the indication "Held by: VU Library" and click on the button [Access online]. This will lead you to the website of the publisher of the journal, where you can read the article via the link "Download PDF".

N.B. You can also use LibSearch from the home page of the UB VU.
If you want to use LibSearch when you are outside the VU, you will have to log in with your VUnet-id first.

In the course of your studies you will learn more about the facilities the UB VU offers and how you can use these effectively.

Web addresses

VUnet	https://vunet.vu.nl
VU webmail	https://webmail.vu.nl/
Canvas	https://canvas.vu.nl/
Canvas *support site*	https://sites.google.com/vu.nl/canvasstudentguide
Study guide	https://vu.nl/en/study-guide
Timetable	https://rooster.vu.nl/
Personal web pages academic staff	https://www.fgw.vu.nl/en/about-the-faculty/staff/index.aspx
UB VU: website	http://www.ub.vu.nl/en/
UB VU: LibSearch	https://vu.on.worldcat.org/discovery
Digital Humanities Workbench	https://www2.fgw.vu.nl/werkbanken/dighum

[2] 'B' stands for 'Bibliotheek', which is the Dutch word for library.