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# UNIVERSITY 101

## GUIDE TO THE FIRST YEAR FOR BIEM AND BIEF STUDENTS

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2023-2024 Edition

Find out more at:  
[astrabocconi.it](https://astrabocconi.it)

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## WELCOME

Dear BIEF and BIEM students, we can officially give you our warmest welcome at Bocconi University! Knowing that going from high school to university can be incredibly stimulating but scary at the same time (we've all been there), we decided to write this brief guide that can accompany you in the beginning of your academic journey, giving you all the information and advices that we wish we would've received our first day.

So, take some coffee (you'll need a lot!) and grow your desire to experiment and your goodwill: these are the key elements to enjoy to the fullest this intense, but amazing, journey at Bocconi.

## 2) WELCOME DAYS

The idea of immediately starting with lectures at university level can be scary, and this is why Bocconi has introduced the possibility of attending the "Welcome Days": days entirely dedicated to freshmen of all the Bachelor courses that allow, among many things, to get familiar with the different university buildings, to meet the Rector and the Dean of the Undergraduate School, to go through some mathematics key concepts during the pre-courses and, above all, to get to know your new classmates!

The welcome week will begin on **August 30<sup>th</sup> 2023** with the presentations, in the *Aula Magna* in the Rontgen building, of the Rector and the Dean that will be divided in two slots:

at **09:00AM** for:

- BIEM students
- BESS, WBB students

at **11:30AM** for:

- BIEF students
- BEMACC, BEMACS, BIG, BAI students

We remind you that it is mandatory to sign up, through the form that you find on Bocconi website, on your slot depending on the BSc chosen.

Besides the initial presentation of the Rector, it will be possible to take part in the single BSc presentations, given by the Course directors that will give an overview of the courses content. You won't have to sign up for these presentations, and following you can find the dates and times:

### BIEM

- **September 4<sup>th</sup>** 2PM-3PM

### BIEF

- **September 4<sup>th</sup>** 4PM-5PM

Furthermore, starting from August 24<sup>th</sup> up to September 6<sup>th</sup>, it will be possible to request a *tour of the campus* and get your own *welcome kit* (with some personalized surprises) in the Roentgen building.

## 2.a) MATHEMATICS PRE-COURSES

As previously mentioned, during the welcome days it will be possible to follow the mathematics pre-courses, that will be held in presence on campus and whose aim is to go over some maths concepts studied in high school, so to start getting acquainted to university lectures and to strengthen some key topics (equations e inequalities, analytical geometry, trigonometry, power functions, exponentials and logarithms). Attendance to the pre-courses is not mandatory and the topics covered are not object of examination, but we highly encourage you to go as it's a unique opportunity



to get to know your future classmates better and to have a “spoiler” of how lectures are going to be during your next 3 years!

Starting from August, you will also have access to some video lectures, given by the university and that can be found on You@B, that you can watch before taking part in the pre-courses.

### **3) USE OF PERSONAL DEVICES AND BOOKS**

Fundamental for lectures and exams is to have a personal laptop, both for courses such as *computer science* (exam you'll take in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester) and to have better access to all the materials given by the university and the professors, all uploaded on the BlackBoard platform. Furthermore, some exams have to be taken on your personal laptop using a software called “*respondus lockdown*”, that you will have to download before the exam session.

Many students prefer to also use an iPad/tablet to take notes, do exercises and write directly on the slides uploaded by professors; this is a purely personal choice, given that some students prefer to take notes on paper while others go with the digital way. However, as previously mentioned, you are required to have a laptop for exam purposes.

As far as books are concerned, we suggest you buy them after the beginning of lectures, because some books might end up being of little use for exams preparation (they can be substituted by handouts or other material given by professors). We highly encourage you to read each exam's section that you find if you keep reading this guide :)



## 4) EXAM SESSION

Exams, in Bocconi, usually take place during two ordinary sessions, a winter one (from December to January) and a summer one (from May to June).

You can then retake the 1st semester exams in July, and both 1st and 2nd semester exams in a session going from late August to early September.

For each exam you have two sittings during the ordinary sessions.

### 4.a) REGISTRATION

In order to sit an exam, you have to register through the You@B agenda. In it you can find exam dates and deadlines to sign up.

It's very important to sign up for the exam, because otherwise you won't be able to take it (Yes, it happened way more than once).

### 4.b) PARTIALS, GENERALS AND CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENTS

All 1<sup>st</sup> year exams have partial exams, an opportunity to reduce your workload for the winter session. You have the possibility to choose between taking one single general exam or two partial exams.

Our advice is to try and take all the partials, as they can really be of great use as they reduce the workload to study during the December-January session. Partial exams take place at the end of October for 1st semester courses and in mid-March for 2nd semester classes.

We highly encourage you to pay great attention to the exam type when registering, as you won't be able to change it after the deadline. We are here reporting the main abbreviations to remember:

I: partial exam

S: general written exam

O: general oral exam

During the 1st year you won't have any oral exam, apart from those who decide to take the English internal exam (more on it in the following paragraphs).

Some courses have scheduled some continuous assessments, that can be brief tests (for example, for computer science) or group projects (in the management course), and for which you don't have to sign up through the agenda.

### 4.c) EXAMS RETAKES

You probably know this already, but in Bocconi you're not allowed to retake exams as long you have gotten a grade higher or equal to 18.

One possibility that the university gives you is to withdraw during the exam. Professors will go into the specifics for this as they slightly change from exam to exam, and in case you withdraw your exam won't be graded and you will be able to retake it in the following sitting.

An advice we give you is to never withdraw from the 1st partial. In case you're then not satisfied with your grade you can always take the general, but at least you have tried! One very important thing to know is that if you withdraw from the 1st partial you **MUST** take the general, and same thing if you withdraw from a 2nd partial (you can't retake the 2<sup>nd</sup> partial in the following sitting!!).

### 4.d) HOW TO SEE YOUR GPA

You can see your GPA on the You@B Pro app (highly encouraged to download it!).

To do so you only have to open the app and click on your profile icon. You will be shown two separate GPAs:

- "GPA" (the one on the left) is your GPA with joint modules, and this means that exams such as legal system I and II, maths I and II and macroeconomics and microeconomics are considered together (ex. the weighted GPA of microeconomics and macroeconomics



constitutes 1 vote that weights 17 credits on the total. This GPA is only used to compute your graduation grade).

- “GPA with modules” (on the right) is your weighted GPA with separated modules (ex. microeconomics is 1 vote with weight 9 credits on the total and macroeconomics is another vote with weight 8 credits on the total). This GPA is used to compute your exchange and master admission scores.

The GPA is always weighted by the number of credits per exam.

#### **4.e) APPLICATION OF THE CURVE TO GRADES**

In our university it is expected that grades follow the normal distribution, like many things in nature. Therefore, for those exams where the normal distribution is not reached, scores are “curved” so as to allow the achievement of the aforementioned distribution.

Mathematics I – General is one of those exams where the normal distribution is not naturally reached, and therefore scores are always increased so as to reach it.

Trust us, you’ll learn to love the curve :)



## 5) ATTENDANCE AND HONOR CODE

The *attendance* is a procedure to follow to register your physical presence in the room.

Even though none of the courses you'll follow this year has a minimum attendance level, it's highly encouraged to register your attendance. On a same note, it's highly discouraged to register yourself as attending when you're not physically in the room, as it violates the Honor Code and can lead to hard disciplinary sanctions.

In order to register your attendance, it's necessary to enter the You@B app, click on the lecture you're following and then click "check in".

The attendance has to be registered at the beginning of the lecture, usually in the first 10 minutes, or it might be considered invalid (there's no penalty for an invalid attendance).

## HONOR CODE

The Honor Code is a very important document you'll hear about many times, as it is fundamental for our university. It is a code that contains behavior rules to follow, directed to the whole Bocconi community in order to guarantee a peaceful study environment in line with the university's values and principles: independence, ethic, transparency, freedom of expression, equality, solidarity, enhancement of diversity, attention to merit and to the development of individual skills, professionalism and attention to quality, social responsibility. The respect of such principles is part of the university's mission.

We are here reporting a summary of what we believe are the most important rules, but we encourage you to read the whole document in order to avoid incurring in disciplinary sanctions:

- Don't register your *attendance* in a class if you're not really there (professors often have rollcalls in classes with mandatory attendance!);
- Don't use academic or electronic material during exams if it's not explicitly allowed;
- Don't ask for suggestions to your classmates during exams;
- Don't plagiarize content without citing the sources in group projects or when writing your thesis in order to protect copyrights (Bocconi uses antiplagiarism software!);
- Don't impede academic activities nor cause potential damages to people and objects.

We remind you that, in order to avoid wrongdoings during exams, you will have to sign the Honor Code before the start (if you don't, your exam might result invalid!).

In case the norms were to be violated, you can incur in sanctions, decided by the Disciplinary Committee after a careful analysis of the case. The most severe sanctions are:

- An admonition
- A temporary ban from one or more courses
- A suspension from exams during one or more exam sessions
- A temporary exclusion from the University

Each sanction can have an impact on the student's career, as it will be recorded on the documents awarding you your degree. Furthermore, in the instances of ban, suspension and exclusion students won't be able to take advantage of benefits such as scholarships, residences etc.



## 6) STUDY PLAN

BIEM and BIEF students have to reach, during the 1st year, a maximum of 59 credits. In order to register for the 2nd year students must have reached a number of 24 credits by the July session (so it's not mandatory to give all the exams of the year to be considered an "in corso" student).

The first year has 4 exams during the 1st semester:

### 6.a.1) MANAGEMENT

Management | 10 CFU | I semester

Description: the course with the most credits of the whole BSc, it's a mix between more theoretical concepts and practical topics. You'll first explore concepts such as governance, companies' stakeholders and some economic models. You'll then have a brief introduction on accounting that includes the main Assets and Liabilities accounts and the most important ratios. You'll then focus on more "managerial" topics, such as companies' internationalization and strategic and operations management.

Exam modalities: It's possible to take the exam in two partials or one general exam. The exam is a set of multiple-choice questions, open questions and some exercises on accounting ratios or other more quantitative topics. Furthermore, a group project can be done that makes up 20% of your final grade. The project is a research on a company that is assigned to you, and the final work has to be an essay and a video that will be presented to the class.

Advice: Go to class and take notes, it will reduce your overall workload and you'll know what to focus on when studying for the exam! You put effort into the course and aim at getting a good grade because it's the exam with the most credits. Slides, together with class notes and the book for the topics you have a hardest time with, are enough to get a good grade. We encourage you to put effort on the group project as well, because if not the score might also lower your exam grade.

### 6.a.2) MATHEMATICS I - GENERAL

Mathematics I - General | 8 CFU | I semester

Description: The most feared exam. The program is vast, starting from sets to linear algebra, passing through the study of functions, limits, series and derivatives. The syllabus contains many theorems and proofs.

Exam modalities: It's possible to pass the course as one general exam or as two partial exams and two continuous assessments online. Given the vast workload, we highly (highly!!) encourage you to take the partial exams, so as to better manage your time and study. The exam consists of some multiple-choice questions, some short paragraph questions (such as brief exercises) and some open answer questions, usually asking for proofs or longer exercises (where the application of a theorem can be asked, for example). Contrary to what many people think, the exam is very mnemonic, so it's highly encouraged to learn since the beginning all the theorems, proofs and definitions.

Advice: Fundamental to try and get a good grade with the partials, as previously mentioned, because it reduces significantly the workload. Partial exams grades are also more impacted by the application of the curve with respect to the general exam. You should really learn and understand the proofs, being able to do exercises is not enough! Theorems and proofs are worth many points in the exam, and therefore it's essential to have a deep understanding of those. Many students don't use the theory book as it's very heavy, and they instead studied using slides and handouts provided by internal and external professors. As far as exercises are concerned, past exams are usually published on the BlackBoard platform.



### 6.a.3) MICROECONOMICS

Microeconomics | 8 CFU | I semester

Description: The first economics course you'll follow at Bocconi. The course is focused on individual behaviors of economic agents, be them companies or individuals. Among the topics covered you can find consumer theories, supply and demand, technology and production, monopolies and oligopolies, choices under uncertainty and information asymmetries. During the course, you'll study different economic models, both from a theoretical standpoint and from a practical approach by doing many exercises.

Exam modalities: It's possible to pass the course either with one general exam or with two partial exams; You also have scheduled 3 tests to take in class that will give you at most 1 extra point to sum to the exam final grade (the bonus point is valid if you take the partials and also if you take the general). The 3 tests are class specific, so it's possible that they are scheduled at different dates and times (based on your class number) and with different modalities that will be explained to you during the course 1<sup>st</sup> lecture. Usually, each test has a maximum of 8 points and to get the bonus point it will be necessary to reach an overall score of 16/24.

An important difference to note is that if you take the partials it will be possible to choose which exercises to complete (based on current modalities, you will be given 5 t/f exercises and will have to choose 4 of them and 3 exercises, among which you'll have to complete 2). If you take the general exam you can't choose which exercises to do and you have to complete all of them.

Advice: Go to class and take notes, the book is not very used among students but it's still interesting to read it. Slides contain what you should focus on the most and it's always encouraged to study from your professor's material. The course has a theoretical nature but it's fundamental to know how to solve exercises, and for this we highly encourage you to buy the exercise book. Another advice is to take a look at past exams and to try and challenge yourself by solving them, as you might learn new way of reasoning that can end up being very useful for the exam. Even if you find it hard to understand everything in class, solving exercises help you understand everything better! We highly encourage you to solve all the exercises from the book as you study the theory.

### 6.a.4) CRITICAL THINKING

Critical Thinking seminar | 1 CFU | I semester

Description: well, you can relax, this is not a proper exam as it doesn't give you a grade, but it's a pass or fail. However, preparation is still required to pass it!

Exam modalities: For attending students it is possible to take tests in the room after the end of the lesson, and these tests cover the topics taught in the latest lecture. Students that have totalled 50% of the total points at the end of the 3 tests will pass the seminar. Non-attending students, or those who don't reach the 50% threshold, have to take a general exam consisting of 20 multiple-choice questions.

Advice: Don't underestimate it too much, even if it's easy you might end up taking it 5 or 6 times (we're not kidding, it really happened!). The book is of little use as slides and lecture notes are enough to do well.



The second semester has 5 exams scheduled, among which there's the language exam.

### **6.b.1) MACROECONOMICS**

Macroeconomics | 8 CFU | II semester

Description: After microeconomics, the course moves the focus on the aggregate economic system. Among the topics covered you can find an introduction to macroeconomics with the concepts of GDP and inflation, the goods and money markets and their equilibrium under the assumption of being in a closed economy. You'll study the correlation between their equilibrium, inflation and unemployment. Lastly, you'll finish the course by analyzing public debt.

Exam modalities: It's possible to pass the course with one general exam or two partial exams. The exam consists of open questions (exercises) to which students have to answer by analyzing the macroeconomic models studied during the year.

Advice: Follow classes and take notes! The theory book is not widely used, same as with microeconomics, but it can be interesting to read it. Slides, class notes and handouts are definitely the most used material, together with the exercise book (we highly encourage you to buy it). Another advice is to try and solve past exams, as you can better understand reasonings that can be helpful for the actual exam. Understanding the theory just by going to class can be challenging, but once you start doing exercises you'll definitely solidify your knowledge (we recommend you solve all of the ones from the exercise book).

### **6.b.2) COMPUTER SCIENCE**

Computer Science | 6 CFU | II semester

Description: A very practical course that allows you to gain knowledge on Microsoft Excel and Python. Regarding Excel, you start from the most basic functions to then study the most complex ones. The second part of the semester is instead focus on Python, a programming language. You'll learn the basis of the language, how to create variables, cycles and more. The most important skill you'll develop is to translate real problems to a Python script that can solve them.

Exam modalities: It's possible to pass the course with one general exam or two partial exams. Two online tests are also scheduled to give you 2 bonus points, 1 for each partial. Bonus points are not available to students taking the general exam. The exam is made up of some multiple-choice questions and some exercises to be solved using Excel or Python

Advice: Go to class but, most importantly, go to the practical lectures! They're held both in class and in the laboratories (with Bocconi's PCs), and this will allow you to gain confidence on the exercises you'll encounter during the exam. You shouldn't miss the practical lectures especially if you own a computer with software MacOS, as the exam will be taken using Bocconi's PCs and you might want to get acquainted with them.

Theory books are very useful, and the exercise ones as well.

### **6.b.3) INTRODUCTION TO THE LEGAL SYSTEM I**

Introduction to the Legal System I | 6 CFU | II semester

Description: The first law course that you'll take in the undergraduate. It concerns private law, the law branch that regulates relationships between privates. You'll study private law from a comparative point of view, analyzing not only the Italian system but also different European countries and the United States. A constant of the course is the comparison between Common and Civil Law practices.

Exam modalities: To pass the course you can either take one general exam or two partial exams. A class-specific group project is also scheduled, and it can give up to 3 extra points to be summed to the final grade.



Advice: Go to class, slides are well written but not enough to get good grades. If you take notes from your professor it will be much easier, as you can use the examples given to better understand concepts and to better answer to the open questions in the exam. The exam is indeed composed by multiple-choice questions and 2 open questions (often about the case covered in class and that require a paragraph answer).

### 6.b.4) MATHEMATICS II - APPLIED

Mathematics II - Applied | 7 CFU | II semester

Description: The course is made up of two parts, very different one from the other. The course ranges from pure mathematics (linear algebra, differential calculus with  $n$  variables, integral calculus) to more practical topics, such as probability and financial mathematics. As for Mathematics I, there's theorems and proofs to learn, so the exam is as much theoretical as it is practical.

Exam modalities: The course can be passed either through one general exam or two partial exams. We highly encourage you not to take the general! In both the exams you can find multiple-choice questions, brief exercises and longer ones, characterized by theorems and proofs to apply.

Advice: As for Mathematics I, we highly encourage you to study the theorems and proofs, as being able to solve the exercises is not enough to do well on the exam. Many students don't use the theory book, but rather the slides and professors' own notes. In order to prepare for the exam you can find mock papers and problem sets on BlackBoard (directly uploaded by the professors).

### 6.c) LANGUAGE EXAM

When enrolling for the 1<sup>st</sup> year, you have two options for the language to choose: you can either have English as your 1<sup>st</sup> language, and a level C1 is therefore required, or another language (Italian, Spanish, French or German), and in this latter case the level to be reached is a B2.

In order to pass the course, you can follow classes and then either take the Bocconi internal exam or convert an external language certification.

You can find, on Bocconi's website, all the accepted certifications. We remind you to the link as the list is frequently updated:

[https://www.unibocconi.eu/wps/wcm/connect/bocconi/sitopubblico\\_en/navigation+tree/home/programs/current+students/services/language+center/certificates/certificazioni+riconosciute+per+corsi+di+laurea+triennale+eng](https://www.unibocconi.eu/wps/wcm/connect/bocconi/sitopubblico_en/navigation+tree/home/programs/current+students/services/language+center/certificates/certificazioni+riconosciute+per+corsi+di+laurea+triennale+eng) .

In the case of the English exam, we recommend you take an external language certification, as it is recognized globally and can be used for your exchange application as well (the IELTS is the most widely accepted, but mind that it has a 2-year validity and sometimes it's required to have it at the moment of departure. In order to avoid having to take it twice, as it can be expensive, we recommend you take it during the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, so that you're covered even in case you'd like to leave for the spring term during your 3<sup>rd</sup> year).

In case you'd like to take the internal exam, either for English or the other languages, it will be divided in *listening, writing, reading e speaking*.

It's important to note that during the 2<sup>nd</sup> year you'll have to choose a 2<sup>nd</sup> language, and the level to be reached is B1. In case you're not fluent with any of the languages offered by Bocconi apart from English, we highly recommend you take it as 1<sup>st</sup> language.

Furthermore, International students must take Italian when studying in Bocconi, and as it can be a tricky language our suggestion is to take it during the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, when you've already had one year to learn a bit from friends and the exit level required is a B1.



## 6.d) ICDL CERTIFICATION

In order to take the Computer Science exam, it's necessary to have the ICDL Full Standard certification, composed by 7 exams (*computer essentials, online essentials, word processing, spreadsheets, IT security, presentation, online collaboration*).

If you don't have the certification yet, you can take it at Bocconi, at a lower price than what you would find from other test providers.

You have to buy the skill card and 7 exams (186€ on the website), and you have to take them (either online from your laptop or at the Bocconi test center) before the deadline provided on Bocconi's website (before the 2nd partial). You're indeed not allowed to sign up for the 2nd partial/general if you haven't passed the ICDL certification.

In case one exam is not passed, you can buy another one from the website (without having to buy the skill card again).

As far as the exams preparation is concerned, Bocconi will give you some videos to watch on BlackBoard that can help you prepare each single module. We also encourage you do some mock tests online, as they can be very useful.

As there's a maximum number of exams you can take per day (3), we encourage you to start doing the ICDL as soon as you can, as spots tend to fill out quickly when the deadline is approaching.

If you already possess an IT certification, you can check whether it's possible to convert it (so not to take the ICDL) here:

[https://www.unibocconi.eu/wps/wcm/connect/bocconi/sitopubblico\\_en/navigation+tree/home/programs/current+students/services/it+education+center/it+certifications/prerequisite+for+curricular+exams/](https://www.unibocconi.eu/wps/wcm/connect/bocconi/sitopubblico_en/navigation+tree/home/programs/current+students/services/it+education+center/it+certifications/prerequisite+for+curricular+exams/).



## 7) PROGRAM CHANGE

It's possible to request a Program Change in some predetermined slots during the BSc.

- In case you want to change from your course to another one taught in the same language (ex. both in English), you can ask for it at the end of 1st, 2nd or 3rd year of studies. However, it's highly recommended to ask it at the end of the 1st year, as you won't have to take supplemental exams (or just few of them). In case the change is asked between two courses with a common path (that are BIEM and BIEF), it can be done also at the end of the 3rd semester (January of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of study), as the exams are the same for the courses up to that point in time.
- You can ask for the change between two courses with different teaching languages only at the end of the 1st year. Furthermore, if this is the case you need to have the linguistic prerequisites necessary to enroll in that course.

When changing program, exams can either be directly converted, can require a supplementation or not be converted at all. Exams can be easily converted if they have the same name and same number of CFU (ex. the first 3 semesters of BIEM and BIEF). Exams that don't have a conversion, and are therefore in excess, can be converted as electives during the 3<sup>rd</sup> year. Some exams might, as previously mentioned, require a supplementation, and this is the case of exams with slightly different syllabus or different numbers of CFU. Professors will inform you on the modalities to take these supplements.

It's important to highlight that, if your program change request is accepted, you can't present a new one. However, if your request is not accepted in September, you can try and present a new one in December (in this case, only between BIEM and BIEF). Once your request is accepted, you have 5 days to confirm your choice.

In case there's more requests than places available, a ranking will be made based on merit (weighted GPA and CFU reached). For some courses, a motivational letter is also required (for example, for changes to BAI).

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Thank you for reading this guide! For any further questions contact:

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