

MEDICAL UNIVERSITY - PLEVEN

FRESHMAN'S GUIDE

2024



founded in 1974



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Introduction:

Dear colleague,

First of all, on behalf of all the staff and students, we would like to congratulate you on your admission at the Medical University of Pleven. It is beyond doubt that you have already conquered the first step of your mission, but you should know that there are many more steps ahead of you!

Medicine is an ancient and respected discipline, and it requires and takes a lot of effort and time. Medicine can also be described as a ladder as soon as you reach the top of the first ladder you are at the bottom of the second ladder. This second ladder is known as the ladder of experience.

You should be ready to dedicate the rest of your life to medicine, as it is one of the professions in which you never stop learning!

Your first steps, however, are the most important ones. That is the reason why we have tried our best to portray the reality from here forth for you in this freshmen guide. To make your first steps at the Medical University of Pleven much easier, we have compiled information about the University, the city, and many other details. It encloses the most important and useful information suitable for you as a freshman in the speciality of Medicine.

We would be grateful if you could provide us with some feedback on anything you feel, had been missed or to give us advice on how to improve this publication. More information on how to do so will be provided at the end. With the feedback provided, we can work together to improve the next guide for the incoming students in the next year.

We would like to express our gratitude to everyone who has helped us and to wish you, our dear freshman friend, productive semesters, successful exam sessions, lots of smiles, new friends, and a very happy and successful future ahead together! Working together to provide the best in education as well as the wellbeing of our students always is what we strive to achieve.

We would also like to ensure you that we are happy to provide help and support at any time for our students. You all must feel welcome to bring forward any questions, queries, and suggestions!

Rector's welcome

Choosing the right place to study is one of the most important steps in a person's life. It is with pleasure that I welcome you to our academic community. Our members from all over the world are united by the desire to learn, discover, create, and make a difference.

Medical University – Pleven is an institution of academic excellence, having a community of distinguished scholars and professors with high standards and personal responsibility in teaching and research. For over forty-five years we have been offering high-quality education to medical doctors and health professionals, equipping them with all the necessary knowledge, skills, and experience to meet the challenges of healthcare in the 21st century.

From your first day at Medical University – Pleven we will show you that even though our educational institution is young, it is growing and developing very fast, with an emphasis on implementing advanced technologies in education and clinical practice.

Medical University – Pleven is committed to celebrating diversity and in 1997 was the first university in Bulgaria to introduce a Medicine program taught in English, bringing the benefits of medical education to a broader group of aspiring medical professionals from across the globe.

As newly admitted students at our university, you are embarking on a significant period of transition in your life, in which you will be challenged intellectually, enriched academically and rewarded, both personally and professionally.

Welcome to the start of an exciting journey together.

Professor Dobromir Dimitrov, MD, PhD

Rector of MU-Pleven

Bulgaria – country info

About Bulgaria

Bulgaria is a country in southeastern Europe. It is bordered by Romania to the north, Serbia and North Macedonia to the west, Greece and Turkey to the south, and the Black Sea to the east.

The country falls within the southern part of the temperate climate zone with subtropical influence. The country lies on the transition line between two climate zones influences the climate, soils, vegetation and animal species. All of them are characterized by great diversity.

Bulgaria is a unitary parliamentary republic with a high degree of political, administrative, and economic centralization. It is a member of the European Union, NATO, and the Council of Europe.

Total Area: 110,994 km²

Capital: Sofia

Official language: Bulgarian

Official script: Cyrillic/Кирилица

Population: 6 878 000 people

Currency: The currency unit in Bulgaria is the Bulgarian Lev (plural form leva /levs/) or BGN. 1 lev = 100 stotinki

Calling code: +359

Time zone: EET (UTC+2)

Drives on the: right

Pleven – city info

The town of Pleven is situated in the middle part of the Danube hilly lowland, 160 km from the capital – Sofia, 320 km from the Black Sea and 30 km south from the Danube River. Pleven is a contemporary city, although it is not among the biggest ones, it is the seventh most populous city in Bulgaria. It has many interesting places that can be visited for all types of entertainment. Pleven is an attractive and pleasant place that has undergone lots of changes recently.

The centre of the city is built on a no-traffic street with lots of shops and cafes. You can see many interesting and unique things here. One of them is the Pleven Epopee – the Monument called Panorama that depicts the events from the Russian-Turkish War of Liberation, which you should certainly visit to get a precious notion of the ancient history of Bulgaria. It recreates moments of the siege of Pleven and the Ottoman surrender. As a student, you are entitled to a discount of the ticket fare.

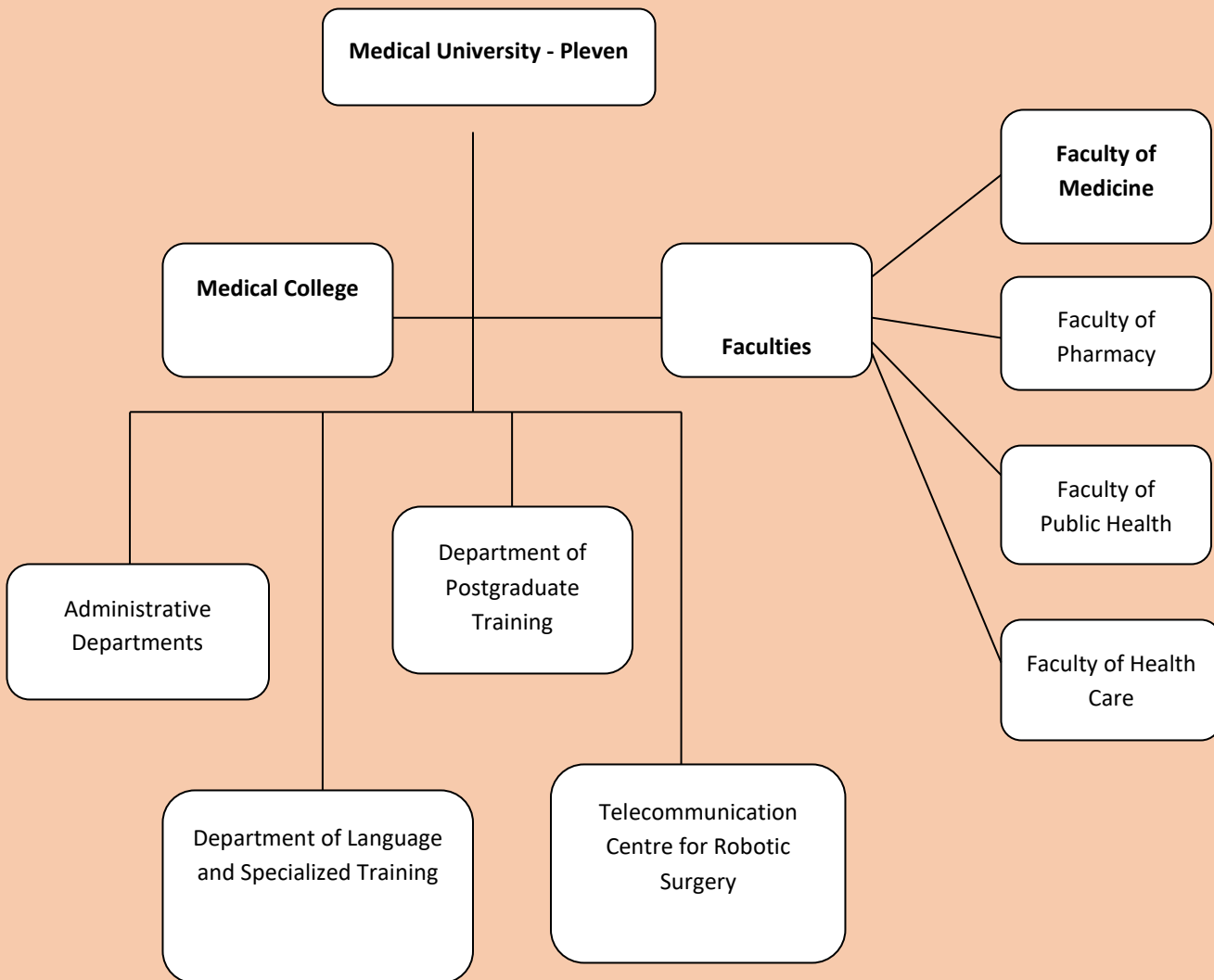
The art-lovers may visit the Ivan Radoev Dramatic Theatre in the centre of the city. One can buy tickets for the performances from the theatre's booking-office or at the University itself. There are two galleries in Pleven called Iliya Beshkov Gallery and the Donations Gallery of Svetlin Rusev. The building in which the second one is placed is very interesting from an architectural point of view – there used to be the public baths. There are lots of museums in Pleven as well – the Mausoleum with the eternal fire, the Museum of Liberation, Wine Museum and the Historical Museum, which is why Pleven is called the city of museums!

There is a park in Pleven called Kaylaka Park, which is the perfect place for rest and relaxation. It is suitable for roller-skating, riding bikes or just having a walk. You may ride a water wheel, visit the Zoo, or have some chips and a beer at a traditional Bulgarian tavern. You can reach Kaylaka Park if you take the trolley-buses No.3 or No.7 from the bus-stop at the City-Hall (also called the City Clock) or simply just take a taxi which would cost around 2 euros (4 leva). Walking to the park is also recommended as it is a 20-minute walk from the clock tower.

Introducing Medical University – Pleven

Established in 1974, Medical University – Pleven has always prided itself on being an innovative university, committed to training the world’s future medical professionals who will carry the meaning of our motto, **Non-Sibi Sed Omnibus (not for oneself but for all)** with them in their future careers.

Structure



Management

Behind the face of Medical University – Pleven is some very important people who are responsible for the welfare of the education, university and mostly the students.

It is a great honour for us to introduce the Governing body of MU – Pleven, which is as follows:

Rector of Medical University-Pleven:

Professor Dobromir Dimitrov, MD, PhD

Vice-Rectors of Medical University-Pleven:

Assoc. Professor Sonya Valkova, MD, PhD - Vice-Rector of Education.

Assoc. Professor Tsvetelina Valentinova, MD, PhD - Vice-Rector of Quality and Accreditation.

Assoc. Professor Diana Pendicheva-Duhlenka, MD, PhD - Vice-Rector of European Integration and International Cooperation.

Professor Galya Stavreva - Marinova, MD, PhD - Vice-Rector of Science and Research

Professor Dimitar Stoykov, MD, PhD, DSc - Vice-Rector of University and Hospital Coordination

Dean's office of Faculty of Medicine at Medical University-Pleven:

Professor Sergey Iliev, MD, PhD - Dean of the Faculty of Medicine.

Assoc. Professor Ivelina Yordanova, MD, PhD - Vice-Dean of Quality and Accreditation

Assoc. Professor Biser Borisov, MD, PhD - Vice-Dean of Education, European Integration, and International Cooperation

Useful contacts

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CENTER:

Professor Angelina Stoyanova, PhD – Head of International Student Center

Admission Office: Main university building Room No.138

Email: admission@mu-pleven.bg

Tel.:+35964884153

STUDENTS' OFFICE:

Students' Office of the Faculty of Medicine is located at 74 Hristo Botev blvd.

Tsvetelina Momchilova - Head of Students' Office

Email: tsvetelina.momchilova@mu-pleven.bg

Tel.:+359 64 800 005

Student`s office staff

Email: ele_edu@mu-pleven.bg

Tel.: +359 64 800 001

LIBRARY: The library is in the main university building third floor

Tel.: +359 64 884 100

e-mail: library@mu-pleven.bg

EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT: The educational department is in the main university building second floor.

Tel.: 064 / 884 130, 884 310

e-mail: sud_edu@mu-pleven.bg

SENIOR CONTACT PEOPLE:

A senior contact person is an elder student who would advise the new students about various aspects of university life, and life in Pleven. Please do not hesitate to contact the senior contact person who is responsible for your group with regards to any doubt or/and pastoral needs.

	Name and contact number of Senior Students
Group 1,2,3	Anik Dey - +359 89 7226734
Group 4,5,6	Simona Lerario: +39 331 177 7789
Group 7,8,9	Ares Cheikho: +49 172 5202004
Group 10,11,12	Nithya Francis: +359879920771
Group 13,14,15	Galla Melgosa Rius: +34 667 07 21 44
Group 16,17,18	Isabella Pagliara: +39 346 856 9612
Group 19,20	Adil Naeem: +44 7895 175811

Undergraduate studies - speciality “Medicine”

You have already been enlisted as a first-year student! You are no longer in High School, you do not have a class teacher anymore, and you will not hear the school bell any longer. **At the University, students should go to all lectures and practical! All missed classes must be compensated!!!!**

The programme of Medicine in English lasts six years (ten semesters and one-year pre-graduate state internship). Except for the fact that instructions, labs, lectures, and examinations are conducted in English, the curriculum of the six-year medical studies in English is completely identical with the coursework pursued by Bulgarian medical students. Learning Bulgarian language is also compulsory during the first three years of the programme. Before entering the clinical phase of their education students are required to have a good command of Bulgarian language to avoid misunderstanding with patients.

The first two years of medical school includes an overview of fundamental or basic science courses. The first year is devoted to the general understanding of biological, chemical, and physical sciences applicable to the practice of medicine. Starting with the second year, the focus progressively narrows down, channelling the studies towards those biomedical sciences that are most relevant for a practising physician.

At lectures, professors, and assistant professors (lecturers with an academic rank) teach the theoretical material in the respective discipline; therefore, the whole batch of students must attend the lectures.

Practical classes are also included in the curriculum and are attended by separate groups of students consisting of 15 to 20 persons each. The assistants of the respective departments hold the practical classes. As far as the duration of classes is concerned, you should know that one academic hour is 45 minutes, however, one normal practical class usually consists of two academic hours, which means it will have a duration of one and a half astronomical hours. Some classes may consist of three academic hours making them 2 hours and fifteen minutes in duration!

The departments at Medical University – Pleven and the various clinics where the students are trained are situated at different places in the city of Pleven. The central building of the University is the Rector’s building (also called the Chancellor’s office) with the sections of the Faculty of Medicine, Public Health and Faculty of Health Care behind it and a new faculty – Faculty of Pharmacy. In this part of the university, the classes in the preclinical disciplines are carried out. The teaching from the third year onwards takes place almost exclusively in clinical settings and involves work with patients admitted for treatment at the respective clinical bases – First Clinical Base at the University Hospital Dr Georgi Stranski, Second Clinical Base and St. Marina Hospital which is located slightly further away! However, the access to these places is very easy, you will not start with your clinics until you are in your fourth semester.

After successful completion of the entire course of study and successfully passing the State Final Examinations, students are awarded a diploma of completed higher medical education with educational qualification – Master’s degree in the Specialty of Medicine and professional qualification “Physician” (Doctor of Medicine).

The academic year

The academic year consists of two semesters (autumn and spring), with 15 weeks duration and two one-week vacations for Christmas and Easter. Each semester ends with a regular and secondary examination sessions.

The University has two intakes of students per year. The academic year for Bulgarian students starts in the middle of September and ends in June the following year while the academic year for international students starts in the middle of February and ends in December each year.

Academic calendar first semester

Summer semester
12.02.2024 - 31.05.2024
Easter Holiday
29.04.2024 - 06.05.2024
Regular exam session
03.06.2024 - 07.07.2024
Second exam session
08.07.2024 - 19.07.2024
The academic year 2024/2025 starts on 09.09.2024

Curriculum first year

Course	C/O/	Theor y (hrs)	Practicals (hrs)	Total hours	Semester	Examination
Cytology, Histology and Embryology	C	60	30	90	1 st	First semester
Anatomy	C	45	165	210	1 st and 2 nd	Third semester
Biology	C	45	60	105	1 st and 2 nd	Second semester
Medical Physics	C	45	45	90	1 st	First semester
Chemistry	C	45	45	90	1 st	First semester
Latin Language	C		60	60	1 st and 2 nd	Second semester
Biophysics	C	30	30	60	2 nd	Second semester
Physiology	C	30	60	90	2 nd	Third semester
Biochemistry	C	45	45	90	2 nd	Third semester
Bulgarian Language I	C		180	180	1 st and 2 nd	Second semester
Physical Education	C			60	1 st and 2 nd	Tenth semester
Medical Informatics	O	15	15	30	1 st	First semester
Medical Psychology	O	15	15	30	1 st	First semester

C = Compulsory
O = Optional

In your first year of studies in Medicine your program starts with the following disciplines:

Cytology and Anatomy – These two subjects are studied at the Department of Anatomy, Histology and Cytology. It is on the third floor, in the eastern wing of the Rector’s building. The lectures in Anatomy start from the second semester. The practical classes in Anatomy, which are carried out in the first semester, are three hours a week at the training halls of the department. Practical classes in sectional halls are included in the curriculum – called Dissections. For Dissections, you should be equipped with gloves, pincers, and scalpels.

The lectures and practical classes in Cytology are with two and four-hour durations respectively and are carried out by the same lecturers and assistants.

The Department of Anatomy, Histology and Cytology are proud of its rich Museum of Anatomy.

Examination

- Cytology – After the first semester
- Anatomy – After the third semester

Chemistry – The department of chemistry is to be found on the first floor, in the western wing of the Rector’s building. The Head of the department is Prof. A. Stoyanova, PhD who works in room No. 119. The lectures are held by Prof. A. Stoyanova. The lectures in Chemistry consist of three academic hours a week. The practical classes are three hours a week as well and are carried out at the department itself. It is necessary and very important to pay attention to the safety rules during practical classes to avoid unpleasant accidents. Medical chemistry is studied in a total of one semester.

Examination

- Chemistry - After the first semester

Physics – lectures in Physics are delivered by Prof. Alexandrova, PhD whose office No.239 is to be found in the Physics Sector on the second floor in the western wing of the Rector’s building. The practical classes are carried out in the Physics Sector as well.

Examination

- Physics - After the first semester

Biophysics – After studying a semester of physics, the second semester will consist of biophysics. This subject is to be taught by Professor M. Alexandrova.

Examination

- Biophysics - After the second semester

Biology – the Head of the Sector of Biology is Prof. Milena Atanasova. The practical classes are carried out on the second floor, in the western wing. In biology, you will be covering basic parasitology, molecular biology, and immunology. The course of biology will be studied for the duration of two semesters!

Examination

- Biology - After the second semester

Latin language – Also recognized as medical terminology. It is studied at the Department of language and specialized education for the duration of two semesters. It is on the second floor in the eastern wing of the University. At this department, you can choose to study a foreign language such as French, German and English.

Bulgarian language – It is studied at the Department of Language and Specialized Training for the duration of six semesters. Before entering the clinical phase of their education, students are required to have a good command of Bulgarian language to avoid misunderstanding the patients.

Examination

- Latin language – After the second semester
- Bulgarian first part –After the second semester
- Bulgarian second part – After the fourth semester
- Bulgarian third part – After the sixth semester

Physical education and sports – the Sports Center is in close proximity to the University, to the east of the main Rector’s building. You can reach it if you take the first turn immediately after the Rector’s building or above the Faculty of Public Health. **Physical Education here is a subject that you should not underestimate or skip.** It is a department with a good reputation, well-organized and with established traditions.

Examination

- Sports - After the tenth semester

Biochemistry – In the second semester of your education you will start Biochemistry. The head of this department is Professor R. Komsa-Penkova. Biochemistry is studied from the second till the end of the third semester. This department is to be found on the first floor, west wing of the Rector’s building!

Examination

- Biochemistry - After the third semester

Physiology – Along with biochemistry in your second semester you will also start the course of physiology. The head of this department is Assoc. Prof. B. Ruseva. The Department of Physiology can be found behind the Rectors building opposite the Balkan Hotel on the second floor.

Examination

- Physiology - After the third semester

Elective subjects in the first semester

Medical informatics – for your practical classes you should go the Rector’s building 2, which is for the Faculty of Public Health opposite Hotel Balkan.

Medical psychology – the lectures are held at the main Rector’s building while the practical classes are held outside the university premises. They are performed at the Clinic of Psychiatry, which is in Storgozia area. In order to reach there, you should take trolley-bus No. 3 at the bus stop at the City Hall in the centre, next stop being the so-called Home of the Books, or you can just take a taxi for the cost of about 2 euro.

Examination

- Medical informatics/ Medical psychology - After the first semester

The above-named disciplines are studied during your first and second semester. At the end of the first semester, you must sit for the respective exams in the disciplines which are namely Chemistry, Physics, Cytology and Medical informatics/Medical psychology. At the end of the second semester, you must sit for the exams of Biology, Latin, Biophysics and Bulgarian Language!

Schedule of the classes

The schedule of the classes for the semester shows the exact time and place where the lectures and practical classes will occur. It is placed on our Facebook group – MU-Pleven Student Information Center. Separate exam dates are appointed for the different groups of students within the exam sessions. The exam schedules for the regular, secondary and liquidation sessions will be posted there as well.

Furthermore, every department issues a thematic plan with the topics included in each practical class, which should be performed during the semester. It is better if you read ahead in the respective topic for each practical class to be prepared and make the best use of it.

In accordance with the curriculum, the lecturers at MU-Pleven organize courses and modules of lectures concerning and discussing essential and current issues in the field of medicine, some innovations in the treatment of certain diseases, new inventions. To deliver such kinds of lecture courses, visiting foreign professors arrive at Pleven, famous for their high authority and distinguished in the world medical community. As a full-time student at MU-Pleven, you have the right to get enlisted in such organized courses when they are publicly announced. At the end of the course or module, you will get a certificate for regular attendance. You are supposed to look for information for such organized activities at the notice boards in the University’s lobby or on the light board next to the stairs. Nowadays nothing is more valuable than the possession of information. Another source of important news is the University’s website: www.mu-pleven.bg

Registration and Enrolment next semesters during the study

Please note that according to the University regulations, students shall register for the next academic year/next semester not later than two weeks after the beginning of the academic year/semester. To fulfil the registration requirements, you shall submit to the Students' Office:

1. Bank confirmation of payment of the tuition fee
2. Student's book
3. Note stamped by the library that you do not have books to return/only when you register for next academic year/
4. Note from students' hostel that you do not owe rents (if applicable)
5. Copy of your valid Bulgarian ID
7. Filled in and stamped summer practice diary (for 4th- and 5th-year students).

The fees can be transferred directly to the bank account of the University or paid at the bank office in the University (on the first floor to the left from the lobby) in cash in **Bulgarian currency (levs) only**.

The bank accounts of Medical University – Pleven are as follows:

UBB - BRANCH PLEVEN – branch Pleven

SWIFT: UBBS BG SF

- Bank account in EURO
BG23UBBS88883418307240
- Bank account in BGN
BG98UBBS88883118307200

You should have in mind that if you decide to leave the University or interrupt your studies for a certain reason during the semester, you will not get your tuition fee back.

SOME USEFUL POINTS FROM THE UNIVERSITY'S REGULATIONS!

Presence on classes

As a full-time student, you are obliged to go to your classes. When you **have a reasonable excuse**, you may take a leave of absence but it mustn't be more than 25 school days within an academic year.

Students failing to attend more than 20 percent of lectures from a subject will not get the professor's signature on the subject and interrupt their studies by reason of not certified semester.

To make up the missed practical classes, you should fill in an application to the Dean of Faculty not later than three days after the last date of your absence. You should attach a medical certificate to your application verifying your illness, which should be attested in advance by the University's doctor – Dr Gadzhelova who works at the General Medicine Department (Rector's Building, 2nd floor, room 287). If you do not have a reasonable excuse for your absences and you have not taken the required colloquium successfully, you will have to make up the missed classes with payment (10 Euro per an academic hour) and repeat the colloquium. **All this must be done within the semester.**

Final semester attestation

At the end of each semester, you should get an attestation - signatures from all the professors and assistants who have conducted your lectures and classes during the semester. To obtain an attestation is based on your regular attendance on the classes and tests during the semester. The attestation gives you the permission to sit on the exams.

If you cannot get signatures from teachers for one subject during the semester you need to know that once, during your entire course of study, you have the right for administrative attestation of the semester, granted from the Dean, for one discipline only.

If you are missing more than one attestation from the subjects studied during the semester or if you have already been granted with administrative attestation in previous semesters and are missing again attestation for a subject unfortunately you will be interrupted because of an uncertified semester.

Evaluation of Student Knowledge and Skills

Students shall be subjected to current control in each discipline. The tests, which are written in High school, are called colloquiums here and include questions and answers, tests, working out a given topic, doing a practical task, etc. Each form of control is chosen by the respective department and conforms to the specific characteristics of the discipline itself. You should know that you are not supposed to have colloquiums within the last 15 days of the semester. It is against the University's rules to have two colloquiums within one working week.

Within the schedule of each academic year at MU-Pleven two regular exam sessions are provided – January and June exam sessions and two secondary ones – in February and July. The liquidation session is in February in which you may sit for the untaken exams, no matter whether they are from the winter or summer sessions. Students may carry not more than three examinations to the final examination session. Exceptions are made if there are acceptable reasons – in cases of hospitalization, serious illness during the session, pregnancy, mothers with children under 6 years of age or other reasonable family matter - then the students are allowed to have one more attempt.

It is not allowed to sit for an examination in a module of a profile discipline if the exam in the previous module has not been successfully passed.

Students may carry three pending examinations from semester to semester.

Students may proceed to the next academic year of enrolment with only two pending examinations. The examination should be completed by the end of the next academic year on the scheduled regular date.

If you have taken a certain exam with a grade, which you do not like, you have the right to repeat the exam to correct your grade, but only if you have given up your first one.

Grading system

2 – Poor (failed) - corresponds to F

3 – Satisfactory - corresponds to D

4 – Good- corresponds to C

5 – Very good - corresponds to B

6 – Excellent - corresponds to A

Authorized Interruption of Study

Grounds for Interruption

Unattested Semester

Students who fail to proceed with the next semester enrolment due to an unattested semester will repeat the lectures and seminars studied in the respective year/semester.

If a student has already interrupted a year due to unattested semester, he/she will be dismissed from the University.

Bad Academic Performance

Students who have three pending examinations after the final examination session will interrupt for poor results for one year. Students may sit their pending examinations within the regular, supplementary, and final examination sessions.

Students are allowed to proceed in the upper course only with pending exams from the previous year of study. (Example: Students cannot be enrolled at 3rd course with pending exam from 1st course)

If a student has already interrupted a year due to poor results, he/she will be dismissed from the University.

Sickness

Interruption of studies for health reasons shall be authorized by the Rector, only once during the years of study, on the proposal of the Dean/Director. Sick students entitled to interruption for health reasons, certified by an appropriate document, may interrupt up to two consequent years. During this time, they are entitled to sit for examinations in the subjects with a certified semester in accordance with the curriculum. In the event of serious and prolonged illness, the Rector may authorize an interruption of studies for up to 3 years.

Social problems, Financial Hardship, Significant Family Related Matters

Interruption of studies is only permitted once during the years of study, regardless of the reasons (social, financial, or family), for a maximum of two consecutive years. Exceptions shall be considered by the Rector of the University on the proposal of the Head of the Respective Faculty/Department, after coordinating the proposal with the Vice-Rector for Academic Activities.

Withdrawal from Study

A student who wishes for any reason to withdraw from the University must write a Statement form to the Rector of MU-Pleven. Your transfer will be possible only with an official Rector's order.

Return to Study

Students who have dropped out of university may apply for readmission, but the application will be treated as a new application. Students who resume their studies will be charged the current annual fee plus 25 percent of it. Students will restart the subjects they have failed following the current curriculum. Credit is retained for all courses that had been fully completed prior to the withdrawal.

Academic integrity and discipline

Breach of academic integrity, such as cheating and plagiarism, are considered disciplinary offences and will not be tolerated.

Cheating is defined as dishonesty of any kind in connection with assignments or examinations; it applies to both giving and receiving unauthorized help.

Plagiarism refers to presenting any work as one's own when it has in fact been done by someone else or copied from printed materials without clear citing of the source. If a faculty member or an administrator has reason to believe that cheating or plagiarism has taken place, he/she has the right to reduce or withhold grades of the exam, homework assignment, or an entire course and/or refer the offense to the Vice Rector who may, in turn, refer the matter to the Rector.

FACILITIES AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS

Accommodation

Apart from the academic matters, you should also think about your stay in the city of Pleven – the place where you are going to sleep and eat. The University will offer you to stay at the students' hostel. It has at its disposal two hostel buildings:

Medic 1; address: No.31 Sergei Rumiantsev str.; phone number: 064/806-479 and

Medic 2; address: Drujba housing complex, bl.#50; phone number: 064/870 742; 870 743.

The hostel rooms are for two or three persons, with a separate bathroom and central heating.

To be accommodated in the students' hostel, you should apply with a filled in Statement saying you wish to be accommodated with your average grade from the previous academic year, signed by the Inspector who oversees your batch. For detailed information, you should address the managers of the respective hostels or ask the inspector in charge of the hostels at the Educational Department, Room No.207. Once you are accommodated you should submit the following documents to the hostel manager:

1. A Certificate issued by the Students' Office verifying that you are a student and the year of study;

2. Two passport-sized photos.

Apart from the hostel, renting private apartments is very cheap. An ideal apartment can be rented for 200 - 400 euros a month. This can vary upon the choice of the student and the location in the city! For more information on the types and costs of renting apartments, you can visit the following website: www.imot.bg. Standard requirements are needed to rent an apartment. Identification, deposit, rent and we are ready to go!

Library

Medicine as a discipline is famous for its piles of thick volumes of knowledge that should be accumulated. You can find your first medical textbooks at the University library. It is on the third floor of the main Rector's building, in the western wing. To use the facilities and books at the library all students need to be registered there you only need student's booklet and a photo. Have it mind that there is a registration fee as well.

Every librarian there will give you proper directions on how to find the right textbooks from your first day at the University until you graduate. The textbooks must be brought back after you pass the exam in the respective discipline. You are allowed to be enlisted into the next year of your studies only on the condition that you do not have any books borrowed. When you have time, you may use the reading-rooms at the library to educate yourself peacefully. Being a student at MU-Pleven you may take advantage of the free Internet access at the library. Along with these as soon as you register at the library you will receive a username and password for our digital library where you can find e-version of the books available for online reading.

Digital Library

<http://ilib.mu-pleven.bg>

Not all books are always available. Some of them, however, you should buy. A list of books will be provided on the University website for the recommended ones.

The bookstore is to be found on the first floor of the Faculty of Pharmacy building.

System for Distance Learning of MU-Pleven

The System of Distance Learning of MU-Pleven provides access to teaching materials and useful study information You can access the information and the educational procedures by typing a „User name” and “Password”, as provided by Student Office or Center for Distance Learning (CDL) of MU-Pleven, and then press „**ENTER**”.You can also log in to EDLS as a "Guest", but in this case your access will be limited to individual information resources published in the system.

Student Canteen

The students' canteen is located right behind the students' hostel Medic 1, where you can have lunch and dinner at quite low prices.

Sport services

All international students that want to take part in sports activities can do so by joining regular sports courses that are obligatory for all regular students of the University in the first four semesters. The types of sport and activities range from football to tennis, from fitness to ball sports and outdoor exercises. Contact the sports' teacher at the university and start keeping yourself fit!

Student Organizations and Associations

There are three students' organizations at MU-Pleven: The Students' Council, The Association of International medical students - Pleven" (AIMS-Pleven) and the Association of Medical Students in Bulgaria (AMSB-Pleven).

The Students' Council is a structure, which is established at every higher educational institution. This is a students' body with the main purpose to protect the common interests of the students. Every batch of students chooses its representative who is going to support their claims and rights. For financing the Students' Council, the total amount of 1% of the sum needed for the financial support of the whole course of training is usually provided. These funds are used for protection of students' social rights, for carrying out cultural, sports, scientific work and research, creative and international activities.

Your close cooperation with the Students' Council will be very useful if you have any problems or questions because it is a body with authority and power. The Students' Council has the right to take part in the organization of the training process and to make proposals for introducing new disciplines in the curriculum. The Students' Council can express its opinion and make proposals regarding the development of the sports activities at MU-Pleven, take part in the management of the students' hostels and in the distribution of scholarships and subsidies for students. The Students' Council has as its main priority to stand up for the students' rights, to help them solve their problems, meaning that it expresses the official voice of students in front of the Governing body of the University. So, if you have any questions or need help, you will always find a member of the Students' Council at their office, on the first floor, in the western wing of the University, at the Chemistry Department.

The activities of the Students' Council are organized in several commissions – Financial one, Commission for social and living matters, Commission on educational activity, Commission on culture and sports, and Commission on Public Relations. To supervise their effective work, a Controlling Council has been established.

For international students, **"The Association of International medical students - Pleven" (AIMS-Pleven)** represents all of us. The students have formed a community in which they work together to provide guidance and welfare under a structured body. You are welcome to join the association and to put through your points, views and to discuss any questions or problems that you are facing not just in terms of education but life in Pleven. The Association is notorious for its charitable events as well as social events it is organizing, including one of the biggest social events of the year at medical university Pleven, International day.

The Association of medical students in Pleven, a branch of the National Association of medical students in Bulgaria, is a newly established structure. It has a varied, motley, and democratic nature full of new ideas. It is a member of the International Federation of the Students' Associations called IFMSA (www.ifmsa.org). The Association of medical students

in Pleven is an independent, unbiased students' organization which unites all the students at MU-Pleven regardless of their nationality, ethnic, religious, or sexual affiliation. Its purpose is to raise the level of qualification of the medical students and their social status. It puts lots of time and effort into dealing with the problems and into implementing the innovations into the medical education; and paying special attention to everything which may concern a young person. It gathers, generalizes, and disseminates interesting and up-to-date information. If you come up with a personal idea or some joint initiative, you may rely on the Association for total support and assistance. So, you should not hesitate to put your ideas into practice – every idea will be appreciated. In a global, the Association takes an active part in organizing students' sessions, seminars, forums, and congresses.

As a member of the international federation, the association in Pleven works effectively on students' programs to help students carry out summer practices in foreign countries and participate in various research projects.

The Association of medical students in Pleven is a structure whose activities are organized in different committees. Every committee has a person in charge of the coordination and facilitation of the students' activities. The meetings of the separate committees are held in the room of the Students' Council. Everybody may take part in these meetings not necessarily being a member of the Association. So in the first week of your studies, you may go to the Association's office and check how to become a member – membership is absolutely voluntary, you should only fill in a Statement form that you wish to become a member.

Nevertheless, you should have in mind that in face of the Association of medical students in Pleven you win the help of a colleague, somebody to share your views with, who is enthusiastic about every initiative concerning or not the curriculum to improve not only the course of training but your life as a student in general.

You may get information concerning students either from the notice boards placed at different places at the University or from any of the people in charge of the separate committees – everybody will find what he is looking for.

Annual International Medical Scientific Conference for Students and Young Doctors (MDSC)

In October every year, there is a conference held at the Medical University of Pleven and is organized by students and young doctors. Students have the chance to participate both actively and passively. Students joining from our university have a discounted fee. This is a good opportunity to develop your CV! For more information on the conference please go to the official website of the university : <http://mdsc.mu-pleven.bg/index.php/en/>

International day

International day in Pleven is an annual event where different countries get together and display their cultures via decorations, food, performances etc. The event is held at the Medical University of Pleven.

ERASMUS + program

The Office of the Vice-Rector of European Integration and International Cooperation – Asooc. Prof. Pendicheva – is on the second floor of the main Rector's building on the east wing. Its main purpose is the direct and active participation in the

process of European integration and education. That is the reason why MU-Pleven takes part in the European community programs in the sphere of education – Erasmus+ and Leonardo da Vinci.

ERASMUS is a program for cooperation in the sphere of higher education. Its main purposes are to improve the quality of higher education and to acknowledge certain periods of education and training, acquired within the frames of the European community. Taking part in this program, MU-Pleven encourages the cooperation among different universities from various European countries. In this way, great numbers of students have already had or will have the opportunity to carry out parts of their training or practices at the partner universities and hospitals. If you wish to participate in the programs, it is necessary to pass an exam in French, German, or English language, to have relatively good grades from your course of study, and to have been involved in various students' initiatives and events. The ERASMUS program provides financial support to organize the mobility of students and university professors, for mutual development and implementation of curriculums, European modules, intensive courses, and lots of other activities.

Inter-institutional contracts for cooperation within the frames of the Extended Erasmus + Charter, the selection criteria and available places for academic exchange are available on the official website.

The sector program maintains and carries out the policy of professional education and training of the member states of the European Union considering the contents and organization of this policy in the respective country. The purpose of the program is by means of the transnational cooperation and accumulated experience to increase the quality of professional education and training, to encourage the implementation of innovations and spread good professional practices.

OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

Migration Office

The international students should know that after their enrollment at the University, they must make a registration at the local police department – Migration office. There they should apply for a Bulgarian ID card, which is a card for a foreigner residing for a long time in the Republic of Bulgaria. For this purpose, they must go to the Passport Office for Foreigners at the police department in the city center on the following address:

address: „San Stefano“ str., 3, 5800 Pleven

working time: 24 hours

telephone: +35964 864 466

For their registration students should present the following documents:

1. Contract for rent of an apartment with a copy which should be certified by a notary;
2. A certificate issued by a bank verifying that the student has opened a bank account at the respective bank institution;
3. Photocopy of the student's national passport;

4. A Certificate issued by the Students' Office verifying their student's status (to get it you should go to your expert at the Students' Office).
5. When you come to Bulgaria for the first time, you should present a copy of your visa to enter the country. If you have visited your native country for a vacation, you should make a copy of this page of your national passport where the last date of entering Bulgaria is evident.

The Bulgarian ID card, which you will get from the passport office, will have validity for either 6 months or a whole year. Seven working days before its expiry date you should apply again for its renewal. When you obtain such an ID for the first time, you should present it at the Students' Office, to the Inspector who is in charge of your batch in order to make a copy of it and keep it in your file.

In case of European citizens, the procedure is quite easier and time-saving. For more information on how to apply and time limits, please contact the Students' Office!

Transport

Getting around the city on foot is quite straightforward. The city is split by a long pedestrian street with many shops and service facilities.

There is also an extensive network of buses and trolleybuses. A single ticket costs 1.50 BGN and you pay to a person on the bus. Main trolleybus lines are numbers 3 and 7 (running between Storgozia and Kaylaka, passing close to the train and bus stations) and numbers 9 and 5, which run between the train/bus station and Druzhba. In case you are planning to travel by public transport every day we suggest that you buy a season ticket. There are cards for one line, two lines and all lines for a period of 1 month, 3 months, 6 months and 1 year.

Taxis are generally cheap. You would normally not pay more than 5-7 BGN within the city. Make sure the driver puts the meter on! Also make sure you have money in cash! There are numerous taxis stands in front of the university, in the city centre and around many bus stops. You can also call a taxi but do not expect them to speak much English.

Taxis on call:

- Orion taxi – 064/805 555
- Svetlina taxi – 064/828 989
- Express taxi – 064/8811
- Rio taxi – 064/815 555
- City taxi – 064 807 070
- Fresh taxi - 0887/88 33 11

Most of the taxi companies call you back. So you just need balance to hear the dialling signal and they will return your call without charge!

Services from Pleven to Sofia (Capital city) – One way

Bus – 10 euros (20 leva)

Train – 5 euros (10 leva)

Taxi (small) – 55 euros (110 leva)

The bus station and the train station are literally next to each other. They are 15-20 minute walk from the university however if you are travelling with luggage you can take a taxi from the university. The price will be around 2-3 BGN.

As a student, you can get a 50% discount on railway services. You need only to go at Students' Office of the Faculty of Medicine and take a certificate verifying your student's status at MU-Pleven. After this you need to present the certificate at the Railway Station authorities, along with 1 photo, to get your student's discount travel card. The cards are valid for one year from the date of purchase.

Banks

There are several banks in the city, however, we recommend either the "Post Bank", "Societe general express bank", "UniCredit Bulbank", "First investment bank" or the "UBB". The UBB is Medical University's official bank of use. It would be safe to withdraw the money from within the UBB and then to deposit it into the University's bank account rather than leaving the bank with large amounts of money!

Identification

It is very important to always carry identification with you! The police are very strict in checking identification due to a scheme to make Pleven a safer place! You can carry either your passport, student's card or if you are from a European country then your identity card or driving license!

Healthcare

In case of an emergency, the emergency number for Bulgaria is 112, for both police and medical emergencies students also can go to the first base of the University Hospital "D-r G. Stranski". The emergency department is working 24 hours a day 7 days a week and gives a very high priority to students! For all other problems, health-related If you need help or consultation regarding your health condition you can contact a team of doctors who work at the Polyclinic Bulgaria at 13 Hristo Yassenov Str., 2nd floor. If you need to discuss your health condition with a doctor, you can call +359 886 178 978 every day from 8 am to 8 pm If you call outside the specified working hours, your call will be registered, and you will receive a call back as soon as possible.

On the university website you can find contact numbers of doctors as well follow the link:

<http://www.mu-pleven.bg/index.php/en/learning/students/577-student-support/6776-contacts-in-case-of-need-for-medical-assistance>

There are several good dentists in the city. If required, please contact myself and I will guide you to a good quality dentist. Dentists in Pleven are not so expensive!

Vaccinations

As you may be aware, working in a health setting requires the medical practitioner and student along with the patient not to be in harm's way. That is why a series of vaccinations against certain occupational diseases is recommended.

Hepatitis A & B vaccination, consist of 3 injections: 1st followed by the 2nd after a month, and the final one after 6 months.

TD-Tetanus/Diphtheria vaccination must be taken if the student hasn't had the vaccine. If the vaccine was taken more than 10 years ago a booster shot is needed.

A vaccination program is available in the hospital at the student's own costs.

Pharmacies

There are several pharmacies that work all hours. If required, you can take a taxi and provide any of the following addresses:

- 1) Higia Chemist's – opposite the First Clinical Base of *Dr Georgi Stranski* University Hospital, on Georgi Kochev str.;
- 2) Sanita Chemist's – next to House of the Book, on Danail Popov Str.

Pharmacies are not expensive in Pleven. A packet of paracetamol costs around 1 euro however not all medications can be bought over the counter. For this kind of medications, it is important to have a prescription!

Mobile Service Providers

Telenor, A1, Vivacom. Telenor is the one most used by students and has affordable plans. Vivacom is the largest telecom company, and you can get packages that combine mobile service with TV and internet. A1 has equivalent plans.

Internet Service Providers

Blizoo, Bulsatcom, Vivacom, Optisprint

ATMs

Regarding Automated teller machines (ATM) it would be most convenient for you to use the one at the Faculty of Public Health and the other one beside the central entrance of the Rector's building. There are many ATMs in the city centre— at the Central Post Office and at different bank branches.

Food

The city has a number of very nice restaurants in the centre, for example, Life, Kanape Food & Club, Speedy, Napoli, Bavaria, Corona and much more which serve traditional Bulgarian food as well as Pizzas, Chinese food and many other favoured foods! A nice pizza with chips and a drink would cost around 10-15 euros! There are also several sandwich bars in the city and close to the University, which is great for grabbing snacks in between lectures and lessons.

Where can I buy food?

For simplicity, let's just mention the large supermarkets;

- Fantazia - A large supermarket located near the University. The address is Boulevard "Hristo Botev" No 140. The supermarket has a hot spot with a variety of meals.
- CBA - A smaller chain of supermarkets, one of it next to the university building.
- Kaufland - A very large supermarket that sells almost everything. There are two big locations in the town as follows: "Grenaderska", str. No119; "San Stefano", str. No80.
- Lidl - a Large chain with location not so far from the University, near the First clinical base.
- Billa - Another large chain with two big locations in the town one is at the Central Mall Pleven the other is in address "Asen Halachev" str. No2.

For all other questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact us. We would be very happy to answer any questions that you have or anything that you are unsure of.

Leisure time

Pleven has two big malls. Central Mall is in the centre and Panorama Mall is located near the bus and train stations. Pleven has many nice cafés which are open until late. They are nice for having a coffee with friends or just relaxing.

There are also several games arcades in the centre. In the malls, there are game arcades with several games to be played. We also have 2 big cinemas as well as a bowling alley in which students often go to play bowling or snooker with other friends.

In Pleven, you can find "Escape room" as well. This type of entertainment is widely discussed lately. It is a great opportunity for practising teamwork or just to have fun with friends.

If you are the person who likes to party, there are a few clubs located in the centre! Students often visit on Friday and Saturday nights! However, there is also an event held on Tuesday nights called the Students Party.

For those who have an interest in sports, there are a few gyms in the city. The gyms are very well equipped. A membership of a month costs around 15 – 30 euros (30 – 55 leva). The University also has a complex in which students can visit free of charge! Here you can enjoy football, tennis, volleyball, table tennis, rock climbing and many other activities again free of charge!

Here are other places you could visit for fitness:

1. Indoor Swimming Pool and Green Fitness, Pleven, Ivan Vazov Str.;
2. Fitness Center Atletico, Pleven, Al. Stamboliiski Str.;
3. Sports club Zeus for kick-boxing and martial arts, No.1 Lyuben Karavelov str., fl.3.
4. At the University you may play the following sports: 1) aerobics; 2) court-tennis and table-tennis; 3) basketball; 4) volleyball; 5) football; 6) rock climbing.

There are also trips that are organized by the University and other students' associations in Bulgaria. Trips include skiing, going to the sea (Varna) and many other places. These trips come in packages so all is included in one price! Please contact the university if you are interested in more information.

There are also a lot of events in Sofia. Mainly musical events in which famous music stars come for concerts. Often students visit these events; however, it would be better to go with a group of students rather than going alone. In these cases, train or bus would be the ideal means of transport to the capital city.

Did you know that...?

- **Nodding** - In Bulgaria, nodding your head up and down means NO, and shaking your head sideways indicates YES.
- **Name Days** - The celebration of name days is an important Bulgarian tradition. Unlike most of the old customs, this one has been preserved throughout the generations and is kept even today.
- **Bulgarian Yogurt** – Bulgarian yoghurt has long been known for its unique qualities. For yoghurt to be considered Bulgarian, it needs to be made with two specific cultures - Lactobacillus Bulgaricus and Streptococcus Thermophilus. The bacteria that contribute to transforming milk into yoghurt and giving it its unique qualities, Bacillus Bulgaricus, grows only in Bulgaria and hence it is difficult to make Bulgarian yoghurt anywhere else in the world without having the proper Bulgarian yoghurt starter culture.
- **1st of March/ Baba Marta** - In Bulgaria, the first day of March is a national holiday. On this day Bulgarians share martenitsi as a symbol of sympathy and friendship, wishes of health and luck. Baba Martha is a personification of the month March. The word “Baba” means “grandmother”. Baba Martha is a woman and therefore her moods

change often. When her mood is good, the sun shines and the spring weather is lovely. The martenitsi are small ornaments made of the thread which are always in red and white colours.

- **Cyrillic alphabet /Кирилица/** - The Bulgarian language is a Southern Slavic language. Bulgarian is written in the Cyrillic alphabet, like many Eastern Slavic languages, and Bulgaria is in fact where Cyrillic originated.
- **Rose production** - The roses are grown in Bulgaria's "Rose Valley" produce most (70-85%) of the world's rose oil – a component in most perfumes.