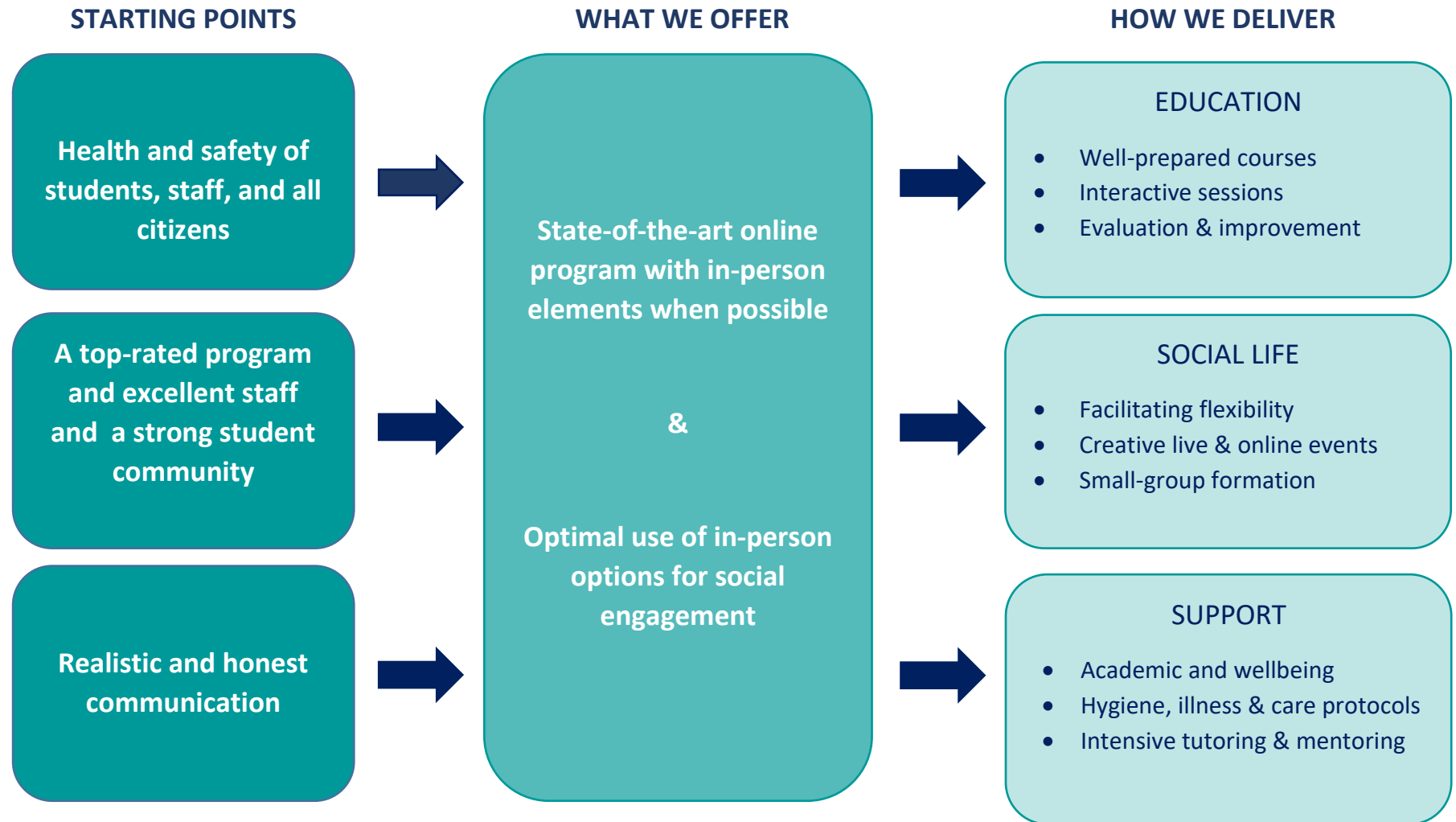


LEIDEN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE: SEMESTER 1 ACADEMIC YEAR 2020-2021



STARTING POINTS

Health and safety of students, staff, and all citizens

In the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic, LUC is committed to providing an education program that prioritizes the health and safety of students, staff, and all citizens with whom they might come into contact. Making health secondary to our preferences in program delivery is simply not an option.

A top-rated program and excellent staff

LUC prides itself on its high-quality educational program that is ranked first among University Colleges in the Netherlands, and second among all bachelor's programs in our country. Our highly motivated staff consists of inspiring teachers and scholars, as well as excellent support staff who together ensure an intensive, unforgettable and enlightening educational experience for our students. In addition, LUC has a range of facilities and community-building organizing bodies that provide our students with a rich social life, intertwined with the educational program. Our strong track record serves as an important basis for coping with unprecedented circumstances.

A strong student community

LUC students are selected for their academic abilities and motivation, but also their motivation to make a positive contribution to the world we share. Indeed, during this pandemic, LUC students have shown themselves to be committed, involved, supportive of each other, and innovative in how to use the changed circumstances as best as they can. This is testimony to the great resilience of our student community, even in challenging times and with students spread across the world.

Realistic and honest communication

The massive uncertainties about the course of the pandemic in the coming period, mean that the suggestion of going back to life-as-usual on campus already in September is irresponsible as it creates false expectations that no institute or program can live up to any time soon. Even with relaxed restrictions, the 1.5 meter society is expected to be in place for many months to come. LUC chooses to acknowledge the situation for what it is in order to provide a realistic and honest picture of what we can and cannot promise for the upcoming academic year.

WHAT WE OFFER

State-of-the-art online program with in-person elements when possible

The combination of putting health first and the strong basis of excellent education, means that LUC will adapt to provide the best possible program under the current conditions, while acknowledging that this will be different from the way we usually teach. Preparing for a largely online program is not only realistic (as also evidenced by the numerous renowned universities that have made the same decision), but gives our staff time to develop their online courses to be great courses. We will avoid last-minute decisions about moving to online teaching forced by the highly likely circumstance of fluctuations in national measures, as this can only lead to lower-quality courses. The full switch to online education this spring necessitated fast action with inevitable learning by doing with the tools available, and in some cases suboptimal solutions. But now that we have made a clear decision for next year, our staff have time to make the online experience a worthy alternative for in-person teaching. As one of our colleagues phrased it: “if I’m going online, I want to nail it!”. We are also in the fortunate circumstance of having several staff members with expertise in online teaching acquired prior to the pandemic that will now be made to good use across the program.

Our staff of course prefers teaching face-to-face, just as our students prefer to be in actual classrooms with their peers and teachers. LUC has therefore made room in the program for hybrid formats in which our teachers can choose to mix online teaching with in-person teaching whenever possible given national regulations. In those cases, special provisions will be made for students who are not yet on-campus or belong to risk groups so that they cannot attend in-person sessions. The e-prospectus will explicitly mention which courses will be fully online, and which will adopt a hybrid model (if circumstances allow). LUC is developing a comprehensive evaluation of these hybrid models so that our experiences can be used to improve these ways of teaching throughout the semester.

Optimal use of in-person options for social engagement

Whereas the quality of the education program is inevitably best served by careful planning and the avoidance of last-minute decisions, there is room for maximum flexibility in social and community life at LUC. All in-person activities that are possible given national and university regulations will be facilitated, and supported by appropriate health protocols. This might mean that opportunities for in-person interaction vary between weeks and months, but LUC is committed to maximizing the options for an in-person social program in a safe and responsible manner. We of course would love nothing more than to see our common rooms, our student-run bar, our pool table, our music practice room, our auditorium, and our study rooms used as they were intended. We will make sure to open them up to students whenever we responsibly can.

HOW WE DELIVER

Education and Social life

We will deliver a state-of-the-art program through the development of a coherent vision on online teaching, that will contribute to well-prepared courses with diverse modes of instruction and (in class) interactive sessions, involving students as co-contributors to enhance our evaluation and improvement of the online and in-person program elements.

LUC will develop and facilitate creative in-person and online social events, invest in small-group formation for safe in-person interactions, with optimal flexibility within national guidelines, and under the inspiring guidance of the Student Life Officer and the team of Residential Assistants and with the ever enthusiastic contribution of Student Association Fortuna.

Support

In this pandemic, every single member of the LUC community needs to take responsibility for ensuring the safety of themselves as well as others around them. We rely on this shared responsibility as a key characteristic of a successful navigation of a challenging situation. But LUC will of course also provide support to facilitate this. We already have a highly professional support system for students with regard to their academic development, and their more personal needs, with in-house specialized Study Advisors and Student Life Counsellors (who are also available online).

This regular care will be supplemented with protocols for hygiene, illness, and health care. The academic advice system will be expanded, and will include small-group tutoring specifically for first-year students, with weekly meetings to make sure we keep in close contact with the new cohort in these unusual times. At the onset of the academic year, special arrangements will be made for safe and responsible in-housing and where needed quarantine facilities. The details about these protocols and arrangements will become more clear in the next weeks and months.

Welcome!

We encourage you to join us on campus in The Hague, whenever the circumstances allow. After all, LUC is not only about learning in the classroom, but also about learning from and with each other outside of the classroom. You will receive more specific information on moving in, arrangements on the residential floors, and practicalities around travelling to the Netherlands in summer.

At LUC we aim to make a contribution to a better world, to address Global Challenges where we can, even, or rather especially, now, during a pandemic that exposes all of us to unprecedented circumstances. In the past ten years LUC has been able to adjust and adapt to changing circumstances. We fully trust that even in this situation LUC can deliver high-quality education with ample room for personal attention. We look forward to welcoming new and returning members to our community after summer!