

Study abroad in a foreign country in a foreign language

Dear Student,

You have made a serious decision when you decided to continue your studies abroad. You have passed the first obstacle, the entrance exam, for which we sincerely congratulate you! In a foreign country, culture, away from your families, you will face the challenges of academic studies. In addition, most of you will complete your academic studies in English, not in your native language even for the most talented students might result failure, weak results, studies. It was not a few students, but about 6-12% of admitted students terminated their academic studies without obtaining degree!

Most Hungarian higher educational institutions have recognized this problem and are trying to help their newly arrived students to integrate, start their lives independently, and adapt to higher academic expectations. In the academic year 2019/2020, ELTE Faculty of Informatics has established the Preliminary semester for this purpose, where we help the first difficulties of integration by offering Basic mathematics and IT subjects, free English lessons. Based on the previous years' experiences on the preliminary semester included in the BSc Computer Science course, those students who chose the Preliminary semester, completed the first semester with a study average of 3.9, students directly starting their BSc Computer Science course, completed their first semester with an average of only 3.51 in 2021. In addition, the proportion of students who have interrupted their studies has been decreased to 4% - 5% since then! **Only 1.1% of the students dropped out of the Preliminary course.**

Preliminary course or directly BSc?

Previously, after enrolment, students were required to take a mandatory placement test. Students obtaining weak results were directed to Preliminary course (<https://csbsc.elte.hu/preliminary/>), students obtaining appropriate results were allowed to start their academic studies directly at Computer Science BSc (<https://csbsc.elte.hu/curriculum/>). Despite, students starting their academic studies directly on CS BSc obtained a weak average, only 3.51.

In the 2023/24 academic year on behalf of the Faculty of Informatics admitted students are offered to make a decision whether you start their academic studies on Preliminary semester or directly start BSc Computer Science course. in which form you would like to start your studies!

For whom is Preliminary semester recommended?

- those students who have written the entrance maths test with 10, 11, 12 or 13 points,
- those whose English level of knowledge does not exceed the strong B2 level.

In order to make decision and consider your chances a sample placement test selected from the previous years will be available in the MOOC used by the Placement test course (see Fig. 1.), you will also receive a new invitation for access. You will also have to make your decision as soon as possible, but no later than 13 August 2023.

The screenshot shows a MOOC interface with the following elements:

- Placement Tests**
 - Algorithmic Thinking Test (13 Aug | 56 pts)
 - Mathematics Test (13 Aug | 15 pts)
 - English Placement Test (13 Aug | 46 pts)
- Preliminary or BSc - please, decide**
 - Decision (13 Aug | 1 pts) - circled in green with a blue arrow pointing to the question card below.
 - BSc preliminary information letter

Question 1 (1 pts)

Please, decide which type of training you would like to start in ELTE in 2022 autumn! You may change your mind during the 10 days long period with refilling this quiz!

I would like to start my studies with Preliminary training knowing the benefits of it.

I reject the opportunity to study on the preliminary semester before starting **BSc**. I understand, that BSc comes with more duties and responsibilities.

Understanding and taking responsibility for all of the above, I would like to miss the preliminary semester and start with BSc now.

Figure 1. In MOOC Placement test course, you can give your decision as it is shown here.

It is fair to say that the Preliminary training means an extra semester of study. **It is true; however, there are also many benefits. Please consider carefully:**

- during the start of your life abroad and the administration of various official affairs, the difficulty of the courses is less demanding, they form a transition between high school and university.
- you can get credit a little easier, which can save you from the threatening dismissal that can result from failure to meet the credit minimum. Those students who are on a scholarship are obliged to study Hungarian language take a successful exam at the end of the first year. During the Preliminary training, you can focus more on Hungarian language learning, which is said to be one of the most difficult languages in the world.

- As elective courses, the subjects of Preliminary semester can also be counted into the elective credits (up to 10 credits). The Learning Methodology can also be brought forward, facilitating the first semester.
- this is your only opportunity to receive the Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship for 7 semesters and not to enter self-financed status after 6 semesters, endangering the acquisition of your degree, thus facilitating your own task.
- 25 credits (+ 4 credits MID, as a Stipendium Hungaricum student) must be obtained in the Preliminary course, 32 credits in the first semester of the BSc, in order to complete the requirements of actual semester and to proceed with your classmates according to the recommended curriculum.
- with free English lessons, your language skills will develop greatly in one semester, you will have a better understanding of lectures, exercises and will perform better.
- it also means a lot to the individual if his or her academic average is higher. Self-financed students can apply for the Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship after fulfilling one semester with appropriate academic results.

If your Math placement test result is **less than 10** from 15 or /and Algorithmic thinking placement test is **less than 28** from 56 than we suggest choosing preliminary course. If your English placement test is **less than 25** points, please register for English course in the case of BSc as well!

Minimum credit

As an internal institutional requirement, it is mandatory to complete at least 30 credits in the first 4 active semesters. It doesn't seem like much, but the prerequisites and offers of subjects per semester make it difficult for those who perform worse in the first semester.

The Preliminary subjects:

- Topics in Mathematics,
- Introduction in computational thinking
- Scratch Programming
- Computers in practice
- Intermediate English
- Learning Methodology

Among the subjects of the first semester prerequisites are the following subjects. This means that without successful completion, no subjects can be added to it.

Prerequisite subject	Subject built on it
Basic Mathematics (IP-18fMATAG)	Discrete mathematics I (IP-18fDM1G) Algorithms and data structures I. (IP-18fAA1G), (IP-18fAA1E) Programming theory (IP-18fKVPREG)
Computer system (IP-18fSZGREG)	Operating systems (P-18fOPREG)
Imperative programming (IP-18fIMPROGEG)	Programming languages L+P (IP-18fPNYEG)
Programming (IP-18fPROGEG)	Object-oriented programming L+P (IP-18fOEPROGEG) Algorithms and data structures I. (IP-18fAA1G), (IP-18fAA1E)

The requirements are stricter for scholarship holders, they are obliged to complete 18-18 credits per semester and 36 credits per year to retain their scholarship status. In addition, if they start with Preliminary semester, in the first year this rule does not apply to them. If they misjudge their strength, they risk losing their scholarship holder status or interrupt their study. Previously, if someone "miscalculated", it was possible to extend the scholarship period. From the academic year 2020/2021, this option has been ceased and after the 6th semester the student will not receive either scholarships or housing allowances (<https://stipendiumhungaricum.hu/uploads/2020/03/2022-10-27-SH-OR.pdf>, page 13, this point).

Regarding Stipendium Hungaricum Scholarship holder students, there is an option to be secured to obtain a scholarship for 7 semesters: choosing Preliminary course. **Once you are awarded the Letter of Award by Tempus Public Foundation, there is no possibility of modification, there is no institutional authority to change the decision.** Later, even if you consider the first semester of the directly Computer Science BSc course to be too difficult, the university has no right to change the conditions of admission - technically: in case you choose directly BSc, you cannot change to Preliminary. In case you choose Preliminary, you cannot change to direct CS BSc course and you have to complete all the courses (except English if you have the required knowledge).

New students (preliminary and first-semester BSc) are assigned into fixed groups. You do not have to register for your subjects in the Neptun system on your own.

Please consider and make your decision carefully, based on the previously prescribed statistics risks and advantages.