

WELCOME GUIDE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

HUMANITIES BUDDY PROGRAMME

FACULTY OF
HUMANITIES

LEIDEN
UNIVERSITY



Universiteit
Leiden
Humanities

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01

Welcome international students

02

Useful Information About Leiden University

03

Relocation Checklist

04

Official Matters

- 4.1 Immigration
- 4.2 Municipal registration
- 4.3 Registration for non-residents (RNI)
- 4.4 Your citizen service number or Burgerservicenummer (BSN)
- 4.5 DigiD
- 4.6 Reporting your move
- 4.7 Leaving the Netherlands

05

Housing

- 5.1 Budget
- 5.2 House search
- 5.3 Rent benefit
- 5.4 Be aware of scams
- 5.5 Utilities
- 5.6 Taxes
- 5.7 Waste and recycling



06

Banking

6.1 Opening a bankaccount

07

Healthcare

7.1 HowdoestheDutch healthcare system work?

7.2 Health InsuranceBenefit

7.3 Family Doctors (GPs or Huisartsen)

7.4 Emergency Care

7.5 Non-emergency medical care

7.6 Other types of healthcare: dentist, optician, mental health

08

Getting around

8.1 Public transport

8.2 OV-Chipkaart

8.3 Biking

8.4 Driving

09

Work and career

9.1 Working as a student

9.2 Doing an internship as part of your study programme

9.3 Finding a job after you graduate

9.4 Orientation Year Visa for (non-EU) graduates

9.5 Learning Dutch

9.6 Volunteering

9.7 Entrepreneurship

10

Other information

10.1 Emergency numbers

10.2 Emergency sirens

10.3 Country and area codes

10.4 Currency & daily payments

10.5 Time zones

10.6 Seasons and weather

10.7 National holidays and festivities



Welcome International Students!

Moving to a different country and starting a new study programme can be a challenging experience. But don't worry! The Humanities Master's Buddy Programme is here to welcome you and help you get used to student life at Leiden University.

When you join the Buddy Programme you will be matched with an experienced student and invited to fun monthly activities. You will be introduced to the university, student life and Dutch society.

If you want to read more about the Humanities Master's Buddy Programme, check out student testimonials and pictures from past events, visit our [website](#).



Useful Information About Leiden University

Student Affairs Front Office

If you have any questions regarding applications for admission, tuition fees, visas and residence permits, ULCN accounts and log-in details you can always contact the Student Affairs Front Office.

Education Administration Office

If you have a question about your study programme, for example scheduling, grades or diplomas you can contact the Education Administration Office

Student Well-Being

During your time as a student, you will probably encounter a variety of challenges. Both in terms of studying and personal development, you might need a little help from time to time. [Here](#) you can find out how you can boost your well-being and who you can turn to for support.

Writing Lab Humanities

The Writing Lab helps students become a better academic writer. Tutors can support you at all stages of the writing process, whether you are just starting out and want help with your planning, or you are already writing. You can join one of the workshops and thesis groups or request a one-on-one session with a writing coach for free.

Humanities Career Service

The Career Service team answers all questions related to your career. It's a good idea to prepare for your future job during your studies. You can contact the Humanities Career Service for help and advice on boosting your CV, improving your LinkedIn, finding (international) internships and work. Workshops and information sessions on career orientation and applying for jobs

are also organized regularly. You can check their activities and calendar [here](#).

Dutch language course 'SPOC'

The Academic Language Centre invites international students who are going to study or are studying at Leiden University to participate in the free online course 'Dutch & More'. In five online lessons, you will learn the basics of the Dutch language and you will familiarize yourself with student life in the cities of Leiden and The Hague.



How to: obtain a LU-card

Why do you need a LU-Card?

Your LU-Card is not proof of student registration, but is still very important. It serves as your:

- Leiden University ID card
- University library card
- Print and copy card
- Access pass for buildings and areas
- Access pass for car parks
- Access pass for the Hortus Botanicus

As soon as possible

It will take about two weeks to receive your LU-Card, so request one as soon as you receive notification that you are fully registered as a student.

Requirements

To request a LU-Card you must have:

- an activated Leiden University student account (ULCN);
- a Dutch address.

No Dutch address?

Arriving in The Netherlands soon? Provide your Dutch correspondence address as soon as possible (see 'how' by clicking the link below) then request a LU-Card. Studying online from abroad? You cannot request a LU-Card.

How to get a LU-card?

Follow this link to the university website and find out how to request one for your specific student status.

Relocation checklist

To make your move as smooth as possible, we have created a list of all the formalities that must be taken care of when coming to the Netherlands. You will find a detailed explanation of each part on the following pages.

Before you move:

- ☒ Choose your study and apply
- ☒ Arrange your visa (if applicable)
- ☒ Arrange your residence permit (if applicable)
- ☒ Arrange travel insurance
- ☒ Arrange accommodation
- ☒ Book your flight to the Netherlands

Upon arrival:

- ☒ Join the introduction weeks OWL (Leiden) or HOP (The Hague)
- ☒ Join the Humanities Master's Buddy Programme
- ☒ Consider joining a student organisation or sports club
- ☒ Prepare to start studying by applying for a LU-Card
- ☒ Register at your municipality to get your BSN
- ☒ Collect your residence document at the IND (if applicable)
- ☒ Take a TB test if you need to at the GGD
- ☒ Obtain a DigiD
- ☒ Open a Dutch bank account
- ☒ Get a Dutch mobile number

Settling in:

- ☒ Take out health insurance Register with a family doctor (GP),
- ☒ pharmacy and dentist for your medical needs
- ☒ Get a bike
- ☒ Get an OV chip card for public transport
- ☒ Discover Leiden and The Hague
- ☒ Learn the Dutch language

Official Matters

When you arrive in the Netherlands, there are certain government formalities that you will have to take care of, primarily immigration and municipal registration.

Immigration

If you have a non-EU nationality, you will need a residence permit to come and live and study in the Netherlands. If you have an EU nationality you do not need a residence permit to study, work and live in the Netherlands. If you are a non-EU student, Leiden University should have already contacted you about your application for a study permit – as they will act as your sponsor. Part of the process may include transferring a year's worth of living costs to Leiden University; only for it to be transferred back to you once you have opened a Dutch bank account.

You can read all about the process of obtaining a residence permit for the purpose of studying on the [website](#) of the IND.

Submit your biometrics

You need to make an appointment for biometric data if you have a residence permit but did not need to have an entry visa (MVV) or have requested an extension or new permit.

Biometric data consists of your fingerprints and digital photo. The IND can only issue your residence document once it has recorded this data.

Collecting your residence document

You need to make an appointment to collect your residence document from the IND. You need the document to identify yourself and prove you are allowed to live in the Netherlands. You either collect your document during student collection days or at the IND desk in The Hague. Leiden University will inform you about the collection days.

TB testing at the Municipal Health Department GGD

Some non-EU students must undergo a mandatory TB health check. The health check consists of a Tuberculosis (TB) examination, during which your lungs will be X-rayed. This health check is part of retaining your residence permit.

Municipal registration

If you are staying in the Netherlands for longer than 4 months, you must register with your local municipality. You will receive a citizen service number or Burgerservicenummer (BSN) as a result of registering in the Personal Records Database (BRP). You need this number to arrange a lot of formalities, such as opening a bank account or taking out a health insurance policy.

The municipality organizes central registration days together with Leiden University in Leiden and The Hague. Leiden University will inform you about the date and time you can register.

Registration for non-residents (RNI)

If you will be staying in the Netherlands for less than four months (for example if you are on exchange in the Netherlands), you can register with the municipality as a non-resident. This is for people who are not moving to the Netherlands long-term, but still need a BSN to (for example) open a bank account or work.

Your citizen service number or Burgerservicenummer (BSN)

Your BSN is an ID number that confirms your personal details in the Netherlands. You will need a BSN to:

- ▶ Open a bank account
- ▶ Get a Dutch mobile number (you don't need a BSN number if you chose a prepaid phone).
- ▶ Work and pay income taxes
- ▶ Get a DigiD
- ▶ Apply for social benefits, such as healthcare benefit and rent benefit

You should keep your BSN secret. Your BSN remains yours and cannot be cancelled or taken from you.

DigiD

DigiD is the Dutch government's online login system. It is only available for people with a BSN. It makes the process of doing your taxes, applying for social security, and any other government service much easier.

There is a full, English-language, guide to getting your DigiD available [here](#).

Reporting your move

If you move house or apartment during your time living in the Netherlands, you need to report your change of address to the municipality of your new address. This can be done on the municipality's website, using your DigiD login. Other government agencies are automatically notified.

Leaving the Netherlands

When you intend to leave the Netherlands for longer than 8 months, you need to de-register from the municipality. You can report your move online (using your DigiD login) on the municipality website. You can also inform the municipality by email.

Once you have de-registered, the municipality will share this with other government agencies, such as the tax office and health insurance provider.

Things to do for free using your student card in Leiden

1

Visit the Hortus Botanicus

The Hortus Botanicus Leiden is the oldest botanical garden in the Netherlands and was founded in 1590 at the Rapenburg in the South Holland city of Leiden. Discover the special collections in the various parts of the garden and greenhouses and choose a walking route to give your visit a thematic touch. Moreover, the Old Observatory is located on the grounds of the Hortus. This Observatory is the oldest existing university observatory in the world.

2

Visit the Wereldmuseum

Due to its scientific orientation and collecting history, Wereldmuseum Leiden focuses on global cultural histories. The themes you see here include religion or indigenous worlds and their struggle for independence and reparation of historical injustice. The exhibitions encourage us to think about what it means to be human, what our connection is with the world around us and how we relate to each other.

3

Visit the Japanmuseum Sieboldhuis

The Japanmuseum was founded in 1999 to express the special and long relationship between Japan and the Netherlands. Japan Museum SieboldHuis has a growing collection of more than 500 Japanese prints, paintings and photos.

4

Visit the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden

The National Museum of Antiquities brings antiquity and archeology to life. Everyone can enjoy the ancient civilizations from Egypt, the Classical World, the ancient Near East and the Netherlands in prehistory, Roman times and the Middle Ages in the museum.

5

Visit the Rijksmuseum Boerhaave

With a collection that shows five centuries of research and innovation, and an intensive collaboration with leaders in today's science, Rijksmuseum Boerhaave offers visitors of all ages an intriguing look into the world of science.

Housing

Students generally arrange their own accommodation in the city. Finding a place to live can be a challenging experience as affordable rooms are in short supply all over the Netherlands. You need to start your house hunt early. You need to find an address you are allowed to register to obtain your residence permit and municipal registration.

If you have not found a place to live before your study starts, Leiden University advises you not to come to the Netherlands. You may want to defer your studies to allow yourself more time to find a place to stay. Your study experience and welfare may depend on your ability to find housing.

To find housing you should take action as soon as possible by:

- ▶ Requesting accommodation via Leiden University. There is a limited number of reserved rooms for international and exchange students. Often the number of applications greatly exceeds the amount of reserved rooms available.
- ▶ Try to find housing by yourself. You can find more information here.

Budget

Before you start your search, you should determine the budget you are prepared to pay. Student cities like Leiden and The Hague can be quite expensive. You should also consider looking in smaller cities around the student cities.

Here is a rough indication of monthly rental prices in Leiden and The Hague. The prices will most likely exclude utilities and internet costs.

- ▶ Room in Leiden: € 450 - € 750*
- ▶ Room in The Hague: € 550 - € 850*
- ▶ Studio in Leiden or The Hague: € 650 - € 950*
- ▶ Apartment in Leiden or The Hague: € 850 - € 1200*

* Including service costs.

House search

You can look at various options:

- ▶ Non-profit housing organisations and platforms such as Room.nl. Room.nl is a platform through which housing corporations like DUWO offer accommodation to students. Priority is based upon students moving to the region from far away and waiting lists on a first-come-first-serve basis. Vestia, Staedion and Haag Wonen are local housing corporations.
- ▶ HousingAnywhere and RoomPlaza are booking platforms for student accommodation. Often student to student rooms rentals.
- ▶ Funda and Pararius are the main platforms for all types of housing in the Netherlands.
- ▶ Kamernet is one of the most popular platforms for finding a room.
- ▶ The Student Hotel, Holland2Stay, Xior, Student Housing The Hague and Homey Housing offer student accommodation in The Hague. Xior, The Fizz and Student Experience offer student accommodation in Leiden.
- ▶ Short term solutions may be asking friends and family or temporarily staying in a hostel or hotel upon arrival.

Tips

- ▶ Stay with friends and family upon arrival.
- ▶ Involve your connections in the Netherlands in the house search as they may be able to help or offer advice.
- ▶ Use social media to try and find flatmates. Students often use Facebook groups to offer rooms in shared apartments.

Rent benefit

The rent benefit (huurtoeslag) is a government contribution towards your rental costs. There are requirements for both you and your (rented) property. For example, the property must be 'standalone', that is, with its own kitchen, bathroom, front door, and address. It must also have a low rental price. Your eligibility for rent benefit is calculated based on your household income. For more information, visit the Dutch Tax Authority website [Belastingdienst](https://belastingdienst.nl).

Be aware of scams

Prepare yourself so you do not fall victim to a rental scam. If the deal seems too good to be true, it probably is!

- ▶ Always check the credentials of the advertiser. Make sure the room is rented via an official website or agency. Ask for photos and personal details so you can search online for reviews or warnings. If possible, meet the landlord during a viewing before accepting the offer.
- ▶ Check the property. If possible, view the property in advance or ask a connection to view on your behalf. Search for the address online and check Google Street View.
- ▶ Check your rental contract. Be sure to understand the terms and conditions. Ask someone to translate if necessary. Ensure your contract mentions your details, the details of the landlord, rental price, rental period, payment method, deposit and a notice period. Check if it mentions what is included for utilities, internet, local taxes and service costs.
- ▶ Make sure you can register with the municipality on the address.
- ▶ Check whether you have to pay an agency fee. A specific finder's fee, contract charge or key fee charged by rental agents is illegal. You should not have to pay anything unless you have asked them to look for housing on your behalf.
- ▶ Be wary if you have to pay rent or a deposit in advance. Do not trust pushy landlords, especially if they are not in the Netherlands. Never transfer money to a landlord who is abroad, asks for cash payment, Western Union, MoneyGram or a non-Dutch bank account (you can check if the IBAN number starts with NL). Do not send copies of your passport to anyone you do not trust.

Help with housing problems

- ▶ If you have been scammed you need to contact the police to file a report. You can contact the police for emergencies via 112 and in the case of no emergencies via 0900 88 44.

- ▶ If you live in The Hague, the Rental Helpdesk (Huurbalie) of the Municipality of The Hague is your first point of contact for rental issues. The helpdesk provides tenants and landlords in the private rental sector with free advice and information.
- ▶ If you are renting an apartment or room in Leiden and you are experiencing problems with your home, rent or landlord, Huurteam Leiden gives advice and assistance. The services of Huurteam Leiden are free and without obligation.
- ▶ The Juridisch Loket is your first stop for (free) legal aid from the central government. You can find more information here (Dutch website, English assistance).
- ▶ International students can also ask the Housing Hotline for help. This is an initiative of the Dutch Student Union (LSVb) and Erasmus Student Network (ESN), through which international students can request online advice on a range of housing issues.

Utilities

In some cases, the utilities (water, gas, electricity) will be included in the monthly rental price. This is called 'inclusive' (Dutch: inclusief) rent. If this is the case, your housing contract should break down the costs each month into 'rent', 'utilities', and 'services'.

At the end of the year, the landlord should provide proof of the actual utility costs they have paid. You will then receive a refund or have to settle the difference.

If your rental price is 'exclusive', then you have to arrange gas, water, and electricity. This means that you are free to switch to the cheapest provider or the one with the best service. Your water company is set by your geographical region.

Taxes

The types of local property taxes that you pay depends on whether you rent a house or share a place. You should expect to receive the bills at the start of the year, in February. Based upon your income and savings you may be eligible for an exemption. You need to ask for the money back. If you have an independent rental contract and your own house address, expect to be charged for:

Waste tax (Afvalstoffenheffing)

This is generally calculated depending on the number of people in your property.

Wastewater and sewage tax (Rioolheffing)

Almost all houses and buildings are connected to the main municipal sewage system. Each household can use up to 500 cubic metres of wastewater (you pay more if you use more).

Waste and recycling

Depending on where you live, you will either have a large waste container(s) with underground storage on the street that are shared, or large plastic waste containers that are regularly emptied by the municipality.

There are also large, shared recycling containers for paper, glass, and cartons. The municipality will also collect material for recycling on various days of the year. On the day of collection, simply leave your waste (neatly) outside of your house before 08:30. You can find the collection days on the waste calendar of each municipality.

Large household waste and garden waste can be brought to a municipal waste station. You can drop off waste at these stations (this can cost money), and you can also ask the municipality to come and pick up waste, free of charge.

Banking

A Dutch bank account is recommended, as many organisations require a Dutch bank account if you want to use their services, especially if you are not from an EU/EEA country. You should be aware that credit cards are not accepted widely in the Netherlands.

Opening a bank account

In order to open a personal bank account in the Netherlands, you must register with the municipality to get a BSN. Some online banks also allow you to open an account before you receive your BSN. You may use a student-friendly bank with a physical office (ABN Amro, Rabobank or ING) or an online bank (Bunq and Bitsafe). Triodos Bank and ASN Bank are generally considered to be the most ethical and sustainable banks in the Netherlands.

During your appointment, the bank staff will confirm your details, check your ID and make copies for security purposes. Remember to update your address with your bank when you move house.

The process of setting up an account can be completed relatively quickly. You will receive your debit card in the post a few days afterwards. You will also receive your authorisation code (PIN) for your debit card by post, usually in separate deliveries.

Important contact information

First point of contact: study adviser

For all questions and problems related to the progress of your studies, whether they be personal or academic, contact your study adviser. You can find the study adviser of your programme [here](#).

Student information desk Lipsius

You can visit the Humanities Student Information Desk for questions concerning:

- registration core curriculum courses
- minors
- PhD applications ([more information](#)) official [transcripts](#)
- opportunities to follow courses if you are not a bachelor or
- master student (Contract and à la carte)

Contact details

+31(0)71 527 64 85

studiepunt@hum.leidenuniv.nl

Education administration office

The education administration carries out the supporting tasks associated with the educational process. The staff provide administrative support for students' educational tracks, from making it possible to enrol for a course through to processing the examination results and producing diplomas.

Contact details

+31 (0)71 527 2260

osz-oa-mohr@hum.leidenuniv.nl



Healthcare

Although the Dutch healthcare system is renowned for its quality of care, there may be some features that can be confusing to newcomers, for example the role of your GP/ family doctor, how insurance works, and getting in touch with the right medical experts.

How does the Dutch healthcare system work?

The General Practitioner (GP) or family doctor (huisarts) is the first point of contact for healthcare. In order to access specialist care, you must get a referral from your GP. This means that signing up with a local GP is very important.

It is mandatory to have some form of health insurance in the Netherlands.

EU students

EU students may utilize their home health insurance in the Netherlands to access health care. This is also the case if your home insurance is public (rather than a private policy). You will need to obtain a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) to access insurance.

Non-EU students

Non-EU students will need to purchase a special type of health insurance to access medical care in the Netherlands. These packages are available through private health insurers, and generally cost between € 300 and € 400 per year for coverage. This makes it significantly cheaper than Dutch basic health insurance.

Some insurers that offer policies of this type include AON, Allianz, and ISI. Make sure to compare policies to get the best deal.

Please note that if you have a non-EU nationality and do not purchase a health insurance package, you will receive a warning letter from the CAK (a Dutch healthcare body). After your third letter, you will receive a fine that could be higher than € 300.

Dutch basic health insurance

If you decide to work or do a paid internship in the Netherlands, you will need to obtain Dutch basic health insurance. Many employers will not let you begin working until you have proof of a policy. This usually costs around € 100 per month. If you have a lower income, you can receive health insurance benefit to help with the monthly costs.

The insurance industry is highly regulated, and monthly premiums and the cost of treatments are set by the Dutch government. Most insurance packages require you to pay for the first medical costs. After that, your insurance will cover the rest.

Most health insurance packages cover medical care, but not dental care, eye care, or physiotherapy. Additionally, most health insurance plans do not cover comprehensive medical health care or treatment.

You can switch your health insurer once per year, and you must make sure to do this before December.

Health Insurance Benefit (Zorgtoeslag)

Health Insurance Benefit, or 'Zorgtoeslag' in Dutch, is intended to help you cover the costs of basic health insurance. You can apply for it through the Dutch Tax Service (Belastingdienst) with your DigiD. The amount of money you receive depends on your income.

You cannot apply for Zorgtoeslag if you are using a non-EU student's insurance policy. If you have a non-EU nationality and work on top of your study (and take out Dutch basic health insurance) you can then apply for Zorgtoeslag.

Family Doctors (GPs or Huisartsen)

Your local GP is the point of access to the Dutch healthcare system. In most cases you will have to consult your local doctor before accessing any specialist care. The Dutch healthcare system tries to avoid prescribing too many antibiotics, and so you may be asked to come back to a second appointment before having any given to you.

You can sign up with the GP closest to you, or another in your local area. Many allow you to sign up online, or by email. You can find the closest GP to you by checking an online listings website. A useful website to help you find a GP in your neighborhood is Zorgkaart Nederland (Care map Netherlands). Additionally, you can search "huisartsenpraktijk" in Google Maps and look for the ones close to you.

Emergency care

In the event of a medical emergency, call 112.

For suicidal thoughts, call 113.

Most larger hospitals have Accident and Emergency services. Look for signs for 'Spoedeisende hulp' or 'she'.

Non-emergency medical care

If the issue is non-urgent but you would like to speak to a doctor you can ring your GP's office during office hours. Outside of office hours you can reach an 'out of hours GP line', which is staffed by doctors.

Other types of healthcare: dentist, optician, mental health

Other types of healthcare are generally not covered by your health insurance, though policies do differ. Make sure to check what is covered before selecting a provider. There is a free choice of dentists ('tandarts'), opticians ('opticien'), or mental health providers. You may be asked to pay for your treatment after your appointment.

Leiden University also offers health care support. For example, if you feel stressed, depressed, lonely, unsafe or suffer from other anxieties, please contact your international office, study adviser or student counsellor. You can also make an appointment with the student psychologist. For more information, check the Student well-being website.



Getting Around

Public transport

The Dutch public transport system includes trains, trams, buses, and water taxis. The national rail company is called Nederlandse Spoorwegen (NS) and is responsible for train services across the country. Their blue and yellow trains are easily recognizable.

Various other companies handle local routes, including Arriva for buses in Leiden, HTM for trams in The Hague and RET for metros.

You can check your fastest commute from A to B via the 9292 app, the NS app or Google Maps.

OV-Chipkaart

You can purchase tickets from machines in stations, or online, but if you are staying in the Netherlands for more than a very short time it is a good idea to get a personal public transport card or OV-Chipkaart. These can be used on all forms of public transport, by 'tapping in' at the station or on the bus.

There are two types of OV-Chipkaart: blue and yellow. The blue card can be obtained at a ticket office, and can then be loaded up with credit at a ticket machine. Blue cards are 'anonymous'. You can also buy a yellow, 'personalised' card online. Yellow cards are linked to an online account, and you can purchase various subscriptions for them.

You can find more information [here](#).

Biking

The Netherlands is known as a biking country with an advanced bike infrastructure and many streets with separate bike lanes. You can tell a bike lane because it is often made from red bricks or red tarmac (and usually has the outline of a bike painted on it).

You can buy a (second hand) bike in hundreds of shops across the Netherlands, and you do not need to wear a helmet when riding it. Make sure to purchase a strong lock with your bike. When you do lock the bike, remember to lock it to something (for example a bike rack). Alternatively, you can also rent a bike. You can easily rent an OV-bike for a day at any train station. You can also opt for a Swap-bike, this is a bike subscription with free repairs and maintenance.

Driving

If you have an EU driving license, you can continue to use it until it expires in the Netherlands. If your license is from a non-EU country, you will need to take a Dutch driving test and obtain a Dutch license. You are only allowed to drive with a non-EU driving license for 185 days after registration.

Work and Career

Working as a student

Many students take up part time jobs to cover their daily expenses. Popular jobs are in bars, restaurants, hotels, delivery, administration jobs in their field of study and at the university itself. Please note that students will have to take out Dutch basic health insurance, pay taxes, and make sure to comply with working regulations. In general, it is not recommended to work more than 8-16 hours per week so that you can continue to get the most out of your study programme.

EU students

Students with an EU nationality can work in the Netherlands without restrictions during and after their studies.

Non-EU students

Non-EU students in the Netherlands require a work permit to work in the Netherlands. The application is submitted by your employer at the UWV (Dutch Employment Agency). In general, non-EU students may work:

- Up to a maximum of 16 hours per week
- Or:
- Full time during the months June, July and August.

Both EU and Non-EU students are allowed to work as self-employed person during their studies. There are no restrictions on the hours. You must register your company at the Dutch Chamber of Commerce or KVK.

Doing an internship as part of your study programme

All students may take part in an internship if it is part of their study programme. No work permit is required, however you must make sure to have a signed internship agreement (signed by you, your internship employer, and Leiden University).

For more information, check the [Leiden University Career Zone website](#), where you will also find all sorts of vacancy websites for internships, graduate jobs, part-time jobs and voluntary work.

Finding a job after you graduate

The Netherlands is home to many international organisations, multinational companies, innovative start-ups and NGOs. For many knowledge-based jobs, Dutch is not required.

Compared to other countries, it is easier to find a job as an international in the Netherlands. However, finding a job is still a process to go through, and searching and applying is something that takes time and can be confidence-sapping. Luckily at Leiden University we have the [Career Services](#), which advises students and recent graduates on the transition from study to first job, and offer guidance on how to boost your CV, write a good cover letter, and prepare for interviews.

It is worth considering that Leiden and The Hague are part of the 'Randstad' conurbation of over 8.5 million people, this means that if you are willing to commute to another city, the chances of finding a job increase exponentially.

Orientation Year Visa for (non-EU) graduates

At the end of your study programme in the Netherlands, all students with a non-EU nationality may apply for an Orientation Year permit (Zoekjaar). This permit allows you to live and work with no work restrictions in the Netherlands for one year. You can apply for the Orientation Year permit up to three years after you graduate – even if you move back to your country of origin or elsewhere.

One of the advantages of the Orientation Year permit is that it allows you to access the Highly Skilled Migrant permit with a lower salary level. This means that you are as competitive on the labour market as a graduate with Dutch/EU citizenship.

For more information on the Orientation Year Visa, head to the [IND website](#).

Learning Dutch

Whilst there are plenty of people working in the Netherlands that do not speak Dutch, learning Dutch will be very beneficial for any job search after you graduate. There are plenty of opportunities to learn Dutch in Leiden and The Hague. Leiden University offers a wide variety of courses, such as the free online [course 'SPOC Dutch & More'](#).

The Academic Language Centre (ATC) of Leiden University offers other Dutch courses as well, which you can find [here](#).

Volunteering

It is important to note that volunteering has a different status in the Netherlands compared to many countries. Not only are volunteers often offered a small financial contribution for their time, employers consider volunteer work to be on a similar level to paid work, especially if it is relevant to the job function. Lots of Dutch people take time to volunteer in their careers, and it can be a very rewarding experience. You do not need a work permit to volunteer.

Entrepreneurship

The Netherlands is very highly rated as a place for entrepreneurs. The process of starting-up a business has been made as simple as possible, and there are large numbers of start-up hubs that offer discounted office space, access to experts, and support with finding financing. [PLNT](#) offers workshops and mentoring programs for students interested in entrepreneurship in both Leiden and The Hague.

Other Information

Emergency numbers

Fire, police, and ambulance services: 112

Non-emergency police contact number: +31 (0) 900 88 44

Emergency sirens

There are around 4,200 emergency sirens located around the Netherlands. If you hear the sirens, go home, and turn on the television or radio for updates.

However, the first Monday of each month, at 12:00, the sirens are tested. So if you hear the sirens on the first Monday of the month, do not be worried!

Country and area codes

Country Code for the Netherlands:
+31

Dutch mobile phone number code:
113

Area code for Leiden:
071

Area code for The Hague:
070

Currency & daily payments

The currency in use in the Netherlands is the Euro, and most places take both cash and card payments. However, there are many places that are cash-free. In many places, contactless or mobile phone-based payment is preferred.

Please note that many places do not accept Visa, American Express, or Mastercard. Dutch bank cards will most often be Maestro branded.

Time zones

The Netherlands is located in the Central European time zone (CET). This is one hour after Greenwich Mean Time (GMT +1). At the moment, the Netherlands observes a Summer Time shift, with the clocks being put forwards by one hour in spring, and back again an hour in autumn.

Seasons and weather

Generally the Netherlands has a 'temperate maritime climate', which means that winters are usually mild and summers cool. Rainfall is distributed throughout the year, with winter temperatures generally between around 2 and 6 degrees centigrade and summer temperatures between 17 and 20 degrees centigrade.

In recent years there have been longer periods of dry, warm weather. There is often a little snowfall in January and February, and the Netherlands is affected by North Sea storms in the autumn and spring.

National holidays and festivities

On national holidays people in the Netherlands have the day off work and though only (some) Christian holidays are recognised as national holidays, the right to take time off for a religious holiday is protected by law.

- ▶ New Year's Day (Nieuwjaarsdag) - 1 January
- ▶ Good Friday (Goede Vrijdag) - 3 April 2026 (not every employer gives the day off work)
- ▶ Easter Sunday (Eerste Paasdag) - 5 April 2026
- ▶ Easter Monday (Tweede Paasdag) - 6 April 2026
- ▶ King's Day (Koningsdag) - 27 April
- ▶ Liberation Day (Bevrijdingsdag) - 5 May (only a day off work once every five years)
- ▶ Ascension Day (Hemelvaartsdag) - 14 May 2026
- ▶ Pentecost or Whit Sunday (Pinksteren) - 24 & 25 May 2026
- ▶ Relief of Leiden (Leiden Ontzet) - 3 October (only in Leiden)
- ▶ Christmas Day and Boxing Day (Eerste en Tweede Kerstdag) - 25 December and 26 December

On national holidays and compulsory closure dates, Leiden University is closed and no lectures take place. For more information, check the [academic calendar](#).

Feedback

Do you have any tips on how we can improve this welcome guide? Please feel free to let us know by contacting the Humanities Buddy Programme coordinator via buddyprogramme@hum.leidenuniv.nl. We welcome any feedback and are curious to learn more about your experiences!

