



Study *in* the Netherlands

a guide for
International
Students

Study in the Netherlands!

With a long history of offering international education in English to foreign students, the Netherlands is a great place for studying abroad. In 2010, Dutch universities offered more than 1500 programmes and short courses taught in English. The Netherlands has received international acclaim for its ground-breaking Problem Based Learning system, which trains students to analyze and solve practical problems. By studying in the Netherlands, you will develop an open mind and increase your international orientation.

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The content of this guide has been developed in cooperation with Nuffic.
www.nuffic.nl

1. About the Netherlands

- 1.1 About the Netherlands
- 1.2 The Netherlands in short facts & figures
- 1.3 In this Study in the Netherlands guide

The Netherlands, known for its flat landscape, many rivers and a national virtue of respecting each individual's opinions and convictions, was the first non-English speaking country to offer higher education conducted in English especially designed for foreign students. Dutch culture is famous for icons such as cheese, clogs, windmills, van Gogh and tulips; but the Netherlands culture has so much more to offer - find out more here.

1.1 About the Netherlands

The Netherlands is a kingdom and its official name is the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The country's formal name is Nederland, meaning 'low country', referring to the fact that much of the land is at, or below sea level.

The Netherlands is often called Holland, but this is formally incorrect and goes far back into the European history when the Dutch fleet sailed the world seas and made Holland renowned from China and all the way to the Cape Colony in South Africa during the golden age. Actually, North and South Holland are only two of the country's twelve provinces in the western coastal Netherlands.



The Netherlands is situated in the west of Europe and borders Germany to the east, Belgium to the south and the North Sea to the north and west. It is a relatively small country of just over 41,000 square kilometres, with a population of more than 16 million people.

Many European capitals are within easy reach from the Netherlands, where the German, British and French cultures meet. A short flight from Amsterdam will take you to Paris, Madrid or Berlin, and London is within easy reach thanks to the Eurostar train service.

Still today, the Netherlands has kept its international stamp and hosts four international courts, as well as the EU's criminal intelligence agency (Europol). This has led to the city of Hague being referred to as "the world's legal capital."

A considerable amount of the Dutch wealth is contributed by the financial sector - the capital of the Netherlands is one of the world's major financial centres and houses a numerous regional and global economic organizations. The second largest city of the Netherlands, Rotterdam, is the home of one of the world's busiest ports. The Dutch merchant marine is well developed, and tourism is a substantial industry.

1.2 The Netherlands in Short Facts & Figures

- Capital (and largest city): Amsterdam
- Official language: Dutch
- Ethnic groups: 80.9% Dutchmen, 2.4% Germans, 2.4% Indonesians, 2.0% Surinamese, 12.3% others
- Government: Parliamentary democracy, Constitutional monarchy
- Declared Independence: After the Eighty Years' War, July 26, 1581
- EU membership: March 25, 1957
- Area: 41,526 km² (134th)
- Population 2007: 16,570,613
- GDP Per capita: \$35,078 (10th)
- Currency: Euro (€)5 (EUR)
- Calling code: +31

1.3 In this Study in the Netherlands Guide

A great reason to study in the Netherlands is the broad spectrum of educational opportunities offered here. Read more about the different types of higher educational institutes available in the Netherlands and a few practical details you should consider during your preparations for studying in the Netherlands.



2. Education in the Netherlands

- 2.1 Why study in the Netherlands?
- 2.2 Research Universities in the Netherlands
- 2.3 Universities of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands
- 2.4 Institutes for International Education in the Netherlands
- 2.5 Graduate Schools in the Netherlands
- 2.6 Problem Based Learning System in the Netherlands

2.1 Why study in the Netherlands?

For a small country like the Netherlands, an international orientation – including in the field of education and training – is a must for survival in our increasingly internationalised world. Approximately 95% of the inhabitants speak English and it is easy to blend in socially during your stay.

Respect for each individual's opinions and convictions are a national virtue that gives strength to the fabric of the Netherlands' diverse and plural society. This is the foundation of the teaching method used at the Dutch educational institutions.



The education system in the Netherlands focuses on teamwork, creating an ideal environment to make friends.

The teaching style in the Netherlands can be described as interactive and student-centred, providing students with the attention and freedom they need to develop their own opinions and creativity in applying their newly acquired knowledge. By studying in the Netherlands, you will develop an open mind and increase your international orientation.

The Netherlands also has a long tradition of international students. As early as 1950, the Netherlands was the first non-English speaking country to offer programmes conducted in English especially designed for foreign students. Gaining a diploma in the Netherlands is the key for a successful worldwide career. The Dutch higher education institutions together offer 1,560 international study programmes and courses of which 1,543 are taught entirely in English. This makes the Netherlands the front-runner in continental Europe.

The Dutch system of higher education enjoys a worldwide reputation for high quality. Experience shows that people who have studied at a Dutch higher education institution perform very well in other parts of the world. This quality is achieved through a national system of regulation and quality assurance.

2.2 Research Universities in the Netherlands

There are fourteen government-funded research universities in the Netherlands: nine of them offer educations in a broad range of field, three of them specialise in engineering, one in agriculture, and one is an Open University. These educational institutions essentially train students in academic study and research. However, many study pro-

grammes also have a professional component and most graduates find work outside the research community.

All education programs at research universities in the Netherlands start their first year with the basic courses known as the propedeuse. The propedeuse provide the students with a general introduction to the chosen field, and lays the foundation for the specialized subsequent continuation. As the programme progresses, the students receive more freedom to choose their subjects. The final step is the thesis based on the student's own research.

The universities vary in size, with enrollments ranging from 6,000 to 30,000 students. Altogether they enroll some 205,000 students.

Research Universities used to only offer 6-year educations, and were referred to as 'academic universities', or 'real universities'. Today the duration of the study programmes ranges, depending on the nature of the course:

- PhD: 4 years
- Master of Arts (MA): 1-2 years
- Master of Science (MSc): 1-2 years
- Bachelor of Arts (BA): 3 years
- Bachelor of Science (BSc): 3 years

2.3 Universities of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands

Universities of applied sciences ('hogescholen') offer professional programmes that focus on the applied arts and sciences. The Netherlands has 40 government-funded universities of applied sciences. The largest enroll 20,000 to 39,000 students. Altogether some 365,000 students are enrolled in professional programmes.

Universities of Applied Sciences are more practice-oriented than the universities, offering a variety of full-time and part-time programmes in several sectors. All professional programmes consist of a foundation phase and a main phase, and end with an individual project and thesis. The essential component of the professional programs is the internship, through which students gain practical experience in real work situations.

Duration of professional programmes

* Master (M): 1-2 years

* Bachelor (B): 4 years

2.4 Institutes for International Education in the Netherlands

The Netherlands has been offering a form of higher education, called 'International Education' (IE,) for more than 50 years. There are many different IE courses and study programmes which attract a large number of participants. These courses have gained a reputation even outside the Netherlands' borders and include courses in management studies, agricultural sciences, astronomy, medicine, civil engineering, remote sensing, and the arts.

The International Education is primarily meant for people at a postgraduate level with some prior professional experience and is well-suited for international students. The pace is intensive at an advanced level and all courses are conducted in English. The programs, which last anywhere from a few weeks to four years, are quite practice-oriented and designed to meet the expectations of students seeking specialized knowledge. Institutes for International Education offer masters programmes, but no bachelors programs.

There are five large IE institutes and a number of smaller ones which all focus on development oriented courses. These are based on working in small, intercultural groups and the exchange of knowledge. They are facilitated by teachers with extensive experience in working in developing countries.

2.5 Graduate Schools in the Netherlands

Graduate schools are organizations within universities. They provide challenging study and network environments, like the research schools. Some graduate schools are interdisciplinary, other graduate schools focus on just a few or one discipline.

2.6 Problem Based Learning System in the Netherlands

The Netherlands has received international acclaim for its ground-breaking Problem Based Learning system, which trains students to analyse and solve practical problems independently.

The Problem Based Learning System places an emphasis on self-study and self-discipline with a large portion of all study programmes dedicated to writing papers, working in groups to analyse and solve specific problems, acquiring practical work experience through internships, and conducting experiments in laboratories.

3. Degrees in the Netherlands

- 3.1 Bachelor degree in the Netherlands
- 3.2 Master degree in the Netherlands
- 3.3 PhD in the Netherlands

Students who enroll in higher education programmes in the Netherlands will obtain a bachelors degree upon completion of the undergraduate phase, and a masters degree upon completion of the graduate phase.

Institutes for International Education offer masters programmes, but no bachelors programmes, as opposed to Research Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences who award both types of degrees.

3.1 Bachelor Degree in the Netherlands

A research university bachelors degree program in the Netherlands requires 3 years of study (180 credits). Graduates obtain a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science (BA/BSc) degree, depending on the discipline. A bachelors degree programme offered by universities of applied sciences requires 4 years of study (240 credits). The degree indicates the field of study (for example, Bachelor of Engineering, B Eng).

3.2 Master Degree in the Netherlands

A research-oriented masters programme in the Netherlands requires 1, 2 or 3 years (60-180 credits) of study. Graduates obtain a Master of Arts or Master of Science (MA/MSc) degree. A masters degree awarded in the applied arts and sciences requires the completion of 60-120 credits. Graduates obtain a degree indicating the field of study (for example, Master of Architecture, M Arch).

3.3 PhD in the Netherlands

Research is carried out by research universities, research institutes and companies in the Netherlands. The research universities are the only institutions that can award PhD degrees in the Netherlands, but since research bodies normally work in close collaboration with the 14 research universities, they are also able to provide positions to PhD candidates.

Earning a PhD is a hands-on activity that involves very little course work so PhD students in the Netherlands start doing research from day one. Through work with their supervisors, students are able to develop their own ideas and priorities while performing their research. Research schools and graduate schools provide an inspiring research environment, offering tailor made study programmes, master classes, conferences and seminars.



4. Scholarship Programs in the Netherlands

4.1 Fellowship Programs in the Netherlands

4.1 Fellowship Programs in the Netherlands

The Netherlands Fellowship Programmes (NFP) are designed to promote capacity building within organizations in 61 developing countries by providing training and education programs to their mid-career staff members.

The NFP is funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the development cooperation budget, and specifically invites candidates from sub-Saharan Africa, women, and members of priority groups or those from marginalized regions. Applicants must be nominated by their employers, applications without the support of an employer will not be considered.

A Netherlands Fellowship is intended to supplement the salary that the fellowship holder should continue to receive (at least partially) during the study period. The allowance is considered to be a contribution towards the cost of living for one person, whether in the Netherlands or in another country. The fellowship can also cover the costs of tuition fees, visas, travel costs, insurance and thesis research.

Individuals wishing to apply for the NFP allowance must first gain academic admission to the course of their choice before applying for a fellowship through the Netherlands embassy or consulate in their country. Applicants can only apply for an NFP fellowship if the course is on the NFP course list for that particular year. Applicants are advised to contact the Netherlands Embassy, Consulate or local Nuffic Neso office, well in advance for specific instructions and information.

5. Visas & Work Permits for the Netherlands

- 5.1 Short Stay Visa
- 5.2 Long Stay Visa
- 5.3 Residence Permit
- 5.4 Working while studying in the Netherlands

Students planning to study in the Netherlands need a visa in most cases.

5.1 Short Stay Visa

For a stay of less than three months, a visa may be required, depending on your nationality. You can find information and advice on what is required of you on nuffic.nl, or by contacting your local Dutch consulate or embassy.

5.2 Long Stay Visa

For a stay exceeding three months, you need a provisional residence permit, (“Machtiging tot Voorlopig Verblijf”, abbreviated as “MVV”), unless you are a citizen of an EU/EEA member country, Australia, Canada, Japan, Monaco, New Zealand, the US and Switzerland. This requirement applies to citizens of all other countries. The MVV allows you to enter the Netherlands; however, you must apply for a Residence Permit on arrival.

You will be granted a provisional residence permit under following circumstances:

- * You have a valid passport
- * You have sufficient financial means
- * You are not a danger to public order or national security in the Netherlands
- * The required fees are paid
- * You have a letter or other document from the Dutch host institution stating that you are or will be enrolled as a student

or that you are going to do and internship

- * For interns: you have a copy of the application for a work permit if applicable

- * For Chinese students: you have a Nuffic certificate, necessary to follow study programmes which are taught in English

The application process for an MVV could take between three to six months, so it is important to start the process in good time. You can find more information on nuffic.nl or by contacting your local Dutch consulate or embassy.

5.3 Residence Permit

You are obliged to obtain a residence permit to study in the Netherlands if you are a citizen of a non-EU/EAA country or Switzerland and are planning to stay in the Netherlands for more than three months. It is very important to arrive to the Netherlands with the correct visa; if you arrive on a short stay visa you won't be able to apply for a resident permit. The residence permit has to be applied for within five days on arriving to the Netherlands.

Upon successful completion of your program of higher education in the Netherlands, you may apply for a residence permit valid for five years. To do this, you must have a contract of employment.



5.4 Working while studying in the Netherlands

Many students choose to work while pursuing their education in the Netherlands. Depending on their nationality, students may work for a limited amount of hours/week with a work permit from their employer.

EU/EEA/Swiss nationals are allowed to work in the Netherlands as many hours as they choose while studying. The employer does not need to provide a work permit for this. Foreign students (non EU/EEA/Swiss) with a valid residence permit are allowed to work either full-time seasonal work in June, July and August, or part-time work of no more than ten hours a week outside the summer period. The employer does need to provide a work permit, but it is an easy process, since the employer does not need to prove that there are no Dutch or EU/EEA/Swiss nationals capable of doing the job.

Bulgarian and Roman nationals are also allowed to work while studying in the Netherlands for as many hours as they like while studying. However, the employer does need to provide them with a work permit and also need to show that there are no EU/EEA/Swiss nationals capable of doing the job. Since this is a very difficult process, nationals from Bulgaria and Rumania are advised to work no more than the allowed ten hours/week outside the summer period or fulltime during the summer months of June, July and August. In doing this, the work permit is a lot easier to obtain.



6. Accommodation & Cost of Living in the Netherlands

6.1 Student Housing in the Netherlands

6.2 Cost of living in the Netherlands

6.1 Student Housing in the Netherlands

Finding quality, affordable accommodation while studying in the Netherlands can be difficult. It is very crowded in the Netherlands, especially in the big cities such as Amsterdam, Hague, Rotterdam, and Utrecht, and famous student cities such as Leiden and Groningen suffer from shortages. It is common for Dutch students to have problems finding accommodation near their university.

Most universities do, however, offer temporary, short stay solutions for foreign students upon arrival. If you are part of an exchange programme or enrolled in an international course, it is very likely that you will be offered a room.

Accommodation in the Netherlands is expensive and it is important to remember to also consider additional costs, such as the deposit, gas, water and electricity the price. Also keep in mind are that most leases run for six months to a year, and you must know whether room/apartment is furnished or unfurnished.

It is common to have your own room as a student in the Netherlands, depending on the accommodation. You may have to share the kitchen, living room, shower and lavatory with other students. If you have a problem with men and women living together in a shared house you need to advise the appropriate party since it is common for men and women to live together in the Netherlands.

6.2 Cost of Living in the Netherlands

It is important to be well prepared when studying in the Netherlands. A crucial part of the preparation is to consider your daily expenses. Including food, public transport, books, clothes, cinema tickets, housing and insurance, a student should prepare to spend an average of between €700 and €1,000/month when studying in the Netherlands.

Calculating an average student's income, about one third will go towards housing, another third spent on food, and the remaining third spent on leisure, books, travel and other expenses.

Many places, such as bars, restaurants, museums, cinemas and shops give student discounts. Usually they will ask for proof in the form of a student card from your institution. It is always a good idea to check in advance if a student discount is available. It may be beneficial to acquire an International Student Identity Card (ISIC), since it provides a range of interesting discounts and offers. More information about this is available at the ICIS website.



7. City Guide: Amsterdam

The Netherlands' capital and largest city has everything you would expect a European city to have- and more! Famous for its friendly atmosphere and bohemian vibe, the beautiful city has a myriad of attractions and sceneries to take in.

Visiting one of Amsterdam's many neighbourhood open-air markets is a good way to take in the local flavour with all its smells, colours and sights. Feel the authentic culture come alive while visiting the 'Bloemenmarkt', the world's only floating flower market, located on the Singel canal, between the Koningsplein and the Muntplein. Or soak up the busy city vibe among the stalls of Amsterdam's biggest and busiest market, Albert Cuyp Market, located in the centre of the neighbourhood De Pijp.

Other markets to visit is the organic farmers market Noordenmarkt, located in Jordaan and Nieuwmarkt, situated next to the old Weigh House in the city centre, as well as Dappermarkt in the east of Amsterdam and the flea market Waterlooplein.

Just as any other cosmopolitan city, Amsterdam offers a good workout when it comes to retail therapy. As well as the neighbourhood markets there are over ten thousand shops. Kalverstraat and Leidsestraat are the two main shopping streets and in the Museum District, on and around the fashionable P.C.Hoofstraat, is where you find most of the luxury boutiques and designer flagship stores. Other noticeable shopping areas are De 9 Straatjes (The 9 streets), an area full of unique shops between Leidsestraat and Raadhuisstraat and the historical centre Haarlem which has been voted the best shopping city in the Netherlands several times. There is of course more to see and one can safely say that no one will leave Amsterdam without at least one or two shopping bags in their hands!

When it comes to eating in Amsterdam, there is a world of cuisine available - no one leaves unsatisfied. With a wealth of variety, displaying traditional Dutch cafés, serving nourishing dishes of meat and potato, hearty soups and thick fries, Japanese restaurants, fresh seafood all year around, Indonesian culinary experiences, deep-fried fast food and of course the famous Dutch cheese! Hungry visitors can enjoy their meal while taking in the city's sights on a pizza cruise, floating on one of the city's many canals.

The Royal Palace on Dam Square was built over 350 years ago and is one of the three palaces in use by the Netherlands' Royal family. Open to public visitors, apart from when the red carpet is unrolled for important guests, one can admire what was once the City Hall of Amsterdam with its beautiful paintings, roomy ballrooms and magnificent sculptures.

After a long day of sightseeing and shopping, it's time to kick up your heels and enjoy Amsterdam's vibrant nightlife. In a city that never sleeps, you can enjoy the metropolitan and versatile vibe in one of the many "brown cafés" (Dutch pubs), or over a romantic dinner, before dancing to top DJ's until the early morning.



8. About Nuffic and Educations.com

Nuffic's Study in Holland contributed to this publication.

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<http://studyinholland.nl/>



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9. From a Student Point of View

NAME: Nathania Limanto

AGE: 25 years

FROM: Indonesia

STUDIES: Master of International Communication
Management

AT: The Hague University of Applied Sciences

What is the best thing about studying in the Netherlands?

The best thing about studying in Holland is meeting a lot of new friends from different nationalities. I have learned about their cultures; for instance, we often cooked together and shared recipes from our countries. Moreover, although the Netherlands is a Dutch-speaking country, everybody speaks English! Also, all the courses are in English. However, if you manage to learn some Dutch, you go home with an extra language skill written on your CV.

Why did you choose to study in the Netherlands?

The main reason was because my family has a connection with the Netherlands. I have two uncles and other relatives living in the Netherlands. Thus, my parents suggested that I study in this country. I like the Netherlands because of its diversity and international environment. I have met so many friends from many different backgrounds.

What advice can you give to students that want to study in the Netherlands?

Go for it! It will definitely be the greatest experience in your life! Especially for students from Asia who have never experienced winter in their lives. It is indeed cold, but an unforgettable experience!

Recommend the top 5 things to do and see in the Netherlands?

Visiting Volendam, eating herring, enjoying bread and cheese for lunch, going to Efteling (the Dutch Disneyland), and, if you dare, try 'nieuwjaarsduik' (new year's dive)!

What do you think about Holland and the Dutch in general?

Holland is a flat country with a spice! You will find diversity, international atmosphere, and home in this country. Hence, I call Holland my second home. The Dutch are friendly. They speak English more than people from other countries do. They are helpful. However, you might want to get used to their straightforwardness. Even though their straightforwardness might sound a bit harsh, they do not mean any harm.



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