

**Welcome to  
The Hague  
for International Students**



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# Mayor's Welcome

Welcome to The Hague, international city of peace and justice. There are many reasons to be proud to be mayor of a city where tens of thousands of people are working and studying every day to build a more peaceful and just world. Walking through The Hague, you will hear languages from across the world spoken on every street.

In The Hague we believe that having a wealth of cultures expands our horizons. Our city sparkles with creativity and talent, with more than 480 international organisations and over 30,000 students, as well as numerous businesses and start-ups.

Our beautiful city has plenty to offer you and your family: a historic centre with excellent shopping, culture and varied residential areas, with plenty of green space. Not to mention the seaside, which is only a short distance away from the city centre. Try to explore and see as much of The Hague region as you can.

The municipality of The Hague is very keen to help the international community in any way it can and so, The Hague International Centre was set up for the city's international communities. The staff at the International Centre will be happy to answer any questions you may have about living and working in The Hague and the surrounding area.

I very much hope you enjoy your stay in The Hague, that you feel at home here and become part of our community.

**Jan van Zanen, LL.M.**  
*Mayor of The Hague*

**“Welcome to The Hague, I am delighted that you have come to live here, and I hope you will soon feel at home.”**



Foto: Martijn Beekman



# The Hague International Centre

Moving to another country can be complicated and, at times, feel overwhelming. At The Hague International Centre, we can help you make the best possible start upon arrival.

We are a division of the municipality of The Hague, focused on providing information and assisting international newcomers in The Hague, Delft, Rijswijk, and Leidschendam-Voorburg.

We work as a one-stop-shop for government formalities, different international target groups, including students. Our services are provided in collaboration with both the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) and ACCESS, a non-profit aimed to support internationals in the Netherlands. We also work together with Study in The Hague, Hi The Hague, and Studar to help international students.

## Our Services

### Information on settling in

You can always contact The Hague International Centre for questions around

- Immigration
- Municipal registration
- Obtaining a DigiD
- Exchanging your driving license
- Housing
- Education and childcare
- Healthcare
- Working and finding jobs

If you have any other questions not listed above, we will do our best to help.

## Events

The Hague International Centre hosts a number of events to help international newcomers in the region feel at home, get information, and grow their (social) network. These events include:

- Welcome to The Hague events
- The Feel at Home Fair
- Various seminars and webinars, such as Moving to The Hague, around important topics such as taxes, healthcare, housing and work.

For information about upcoming events, just check out our website.

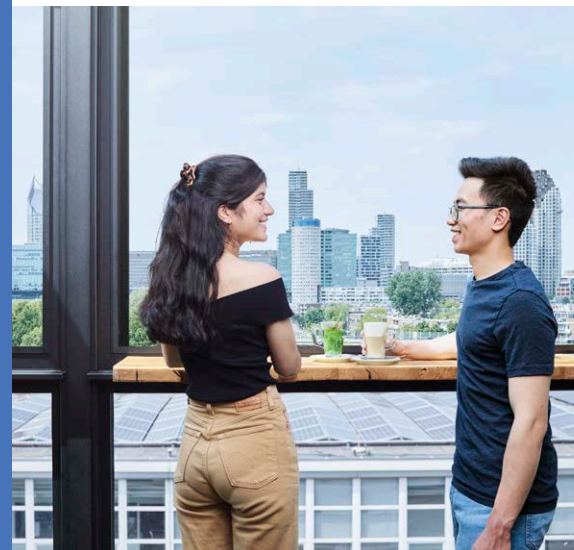
## More information?

Our website is regularly updated and includes information on all sorts of topics to help internationals arrive and settle into The Hague. It also contains a series of useful videos, important news items, and practical answers to frequently asked questions.

[www.thehagueinternationalcentre.nl](http://www.thehagueinternationalcentre.nl)

## Let's keep in touch

The Hague International Centre is here to help people throughout their time in the Netherlands, however long they stay. We have a regular newsletter full of interesting information, a list of upcoming events, and useful tips. Scan the QR-code to sign up for our newsletter! You can also keep up to date with us through The Hague International Centre on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter (@hague\_intcentre).



## Contact Information and Opening Hours

The Hague International Centre is open Monday through Friday between 09:00 and 17:00. You can make an appointment at [www.thehagueinternationalcentre.nl](http://www.thehagueinternationalcentre.nl). If you have any questions, you can visit the Centre or call +31 (0) 70 353 50 43, Monday through Friday during working hours. You can always send an email to [internationalcentre@denhaag.nl](mailto:internationalcentre@denhaag.nl).

If you'd like to visit us, our address is:

The Hague International Centre, City Hall (Atrium), Spui 70 2511BT The Hague

### About ACCESS

ACCESS is a non-profit based in The Hague to assist internationals but also to encourage, support, and facilitate international life in the region. ACCESS is completely managed and staffed by volunteers.

Visit ACCESS at The Hague International Centre. They are there to help you with questions about arriving, settling, and living in the Netherlands.

### About the IND

The IND (*Immigratie en Naturalisatie Dienst*) is part of the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security who are responsible for issuing residence permits for people coming to the Netherlands to live, work, or study. All residence permit applications are assessed by the IND.

### About Student & Stad

Student & Stad is a collaboration between different educational institutes in The Hague and the municipality. As the youngest and fastest growing student city in The Netherlands, Student & Stad was created to support and develop the student climate in The Hague. The Study in The Hague website, the Studar App, and Hi The Hague festival are some of the initiatives created by Student & Stad.

**Their goal is to help you feel at home in The Hague Region.**

## International Offices

The international office at your university can help you with practical matters relating to your life in The Hague, such as your study permit, housing, student life or welfare.

Educational Institute	Contact	Website
The Hague University of Applied Sciences	<a href="mailto:internationaloffice@hhs.nl">internationaloffice@hhs.nl</a> + 31 (0)70 445 85 85	<a href="http://www.thehagueuniversity.com/practical-matters/international-student-services/international-office">www.thehagueuniversity.com/practical-matters/international-student-services/international-office</a>
Leiden University	071 527 8011	<a href="http://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/education/international-students/prepare-your-stay">www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/education/international-students/prepare-your-stay</a>
International Institute of Social Studies (Erasmus University)	<a href="mailto:admission@iss.nl">admission@iss.nl</a>	<a href="http://www.iss.nl/en/prospective-students/studying-iss/student-information">www.iss.nl/en/prospective-students/studying-iss/student-information</a>
Royal Academy of Art	<a href="mailto:international@kabk.nl">international@kabk.nl</a> <a href="mailto:exchange@kabk.nl">exchange@kabk.nl</a>	<a href="http://www.kabk.nl/en/practical-matters/what-to-arrange">www.kabk.nl/en/practical-matters/what-to-arrange</a>
Royal Conservatoire	<a href="mailto:international@koncon.nl">international@koncon.nl</a>	<a href="http://www.koncon.nl/en/international/regular-international-students">www.koncon.nl/en/international/regular-international-students</a>
Inholland University of Applied Sciences	+31 (0)10 439 22 20 <a href="mailto:intoffice@inholland.nl">intoffice@inholland.nl</a>	<a href="http://www.inholland.nl/inhollandcom/exchange/international-office/#The_Hague">www.inholland.nl/inhollandcom/exchange/international-office/#The_Hague</a>
Hotelschool The Hague	+31 (0)70 35 12 481 <a href="mailto:admissions@hotelschool.nl">admissions@hotelschool.nl</a>	<a href="http://www.hotelschool.nl/blog/student-life/">www.hotelschool.nl/blog/student-life/</a>
TU Delft	<a href="mailto:internationaloffice-tbm@tudelft.nl">internationaloffice-tbm@tudelft.nl</a>	<a href="http://www.tudelft.nl/en/education/practical-matters">www.tudelft.nl/en/education/practical-matters</a>



# Study in The Hague.

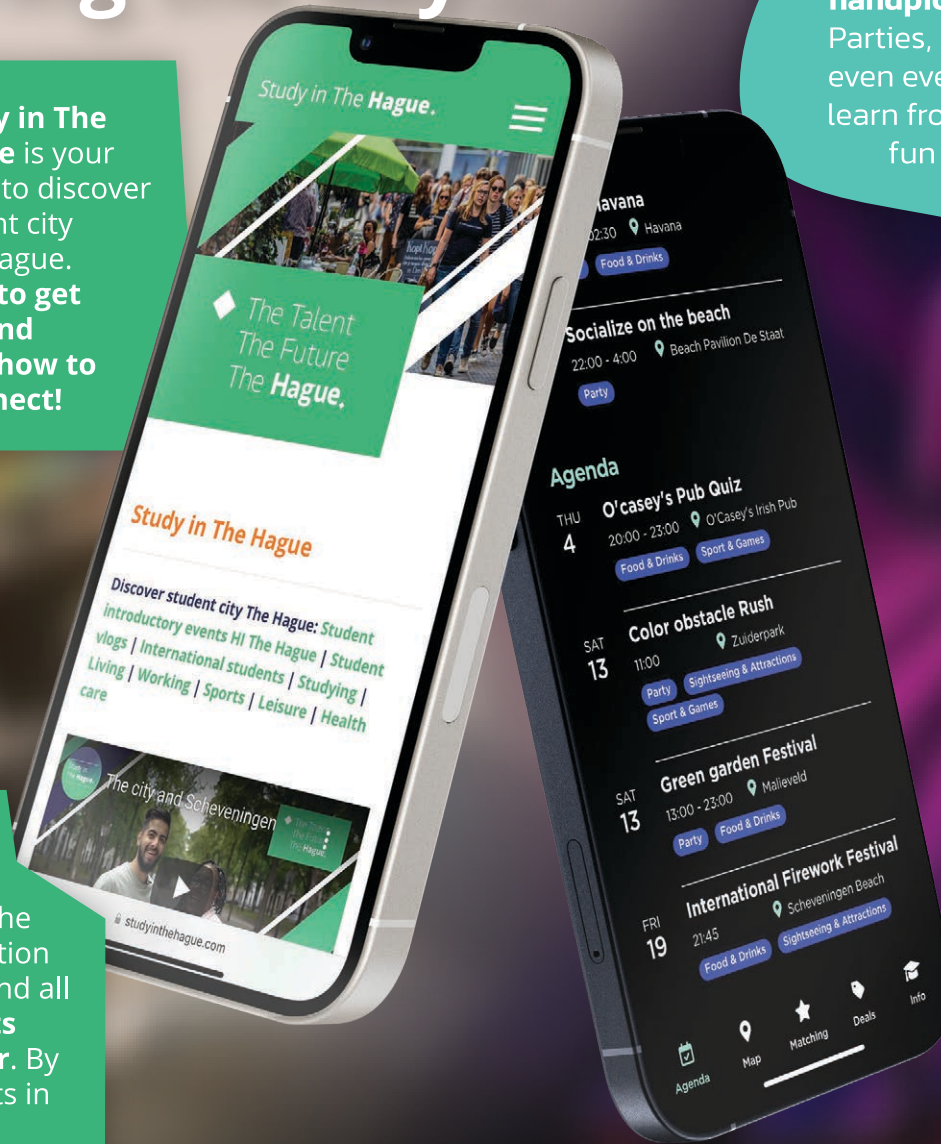
## Activities during the day...



**Study in The Hague** is your guide to discover student city The Hague. **How to get around and how to connect!**

Get to know the **student associations** and student **sports clubs**, and learn where the good **public study spaces** are.

And join the activities of **HI The Hague**: the student introduction in the summer and all the **other events during the year**. By and for students in The Hague!



**Find all the best and coolest events handpicked for you!** Parties, sports and even events you can learn from (only the fun ones).

**What's student life without sweet deals?** We search high and low to save you a precious euro or two.

**Find all the hotspots and hidden gems in the Hague!** Whether you are new to the city or have been living here for years, there's always a new place to find.

# ...and parties at night!

# Relocation checklist

## Before you move

- Research different programmes and apply to your study of choice
- Check your admissions offer
- Arrange your visa
- Arrange your travel insurance
- Arrange (long-term) accommodation
- Arrange transport to the Netherlands

## Upon arrival

- Settle into your accommodation
- Check if you need to arrange utilities for your accommodation
- Register at the municipality to get your BSN
- Collect your residence permit at the IND
- Open a bank account
- Get a Dutch sim card

- Take out Dutch health insurance
- Register with a general practitioner (GP or family doctor), pharmacy and dentist
- Obtain a DigiD
- Get a bike and/or OV card
- Prepare for your studies by researching your chosen school, and which formalities must be arranged before you start
- Take a Tuberculosis (TB) Test at the municipal health centre (GGD), if necessary

## Settling in

- Consider joining a student organisation or a sports club  
Join the introduction week of your educational institute
- Join the Hi The Hague programme for all new students
- Download the Studar app to find fun things to do
- Discover The Hague Region
- Learn Dutch
- Stay updated and subscribe to our newsletter



# Official Matters

When you arrive in the Netherlands, there are certain government formalities you must take care of, primarily immigration and your registration with the municipality.

## Immigration

If you have a non-EU nationality, you will need a residence permit to live and study in the Netherlands. If you are from the EU, you do not need a residence permit to study, work, and live in the Netherlands. Your university should have already contacted you about your application for a study permit – as they will act as your sponsor. If you are not from the EU, there is an income requirement. You will need to prove that you can afford to live and study in the Netherlands. Find out more here: [www.ind.nl/en/income-requirements-study](http://www.ind.nl/en/income-requirements-study).

You can read all about the process of obtaining a residence permit for the purpose of studying on the website of the IND: [www.ind.nl/en/residence-permits/study/student-residence-permit-for-university-or-higher-professional-education](http://www.ind.nl/en/residence-permits/study/student-residence-permit-for-university-or-higher-professional-education)

### Submit your biometrics

You need to make an appointment to submit your biometric data if you need a resident permit but do not need an entry visa (MVV) and again if you have requested an extension or new permit. Your university will inform you about specific appointment slots. Biometric data consists of your fingerprints and digital photo. The IND can only issue your residence permit once it has received this data.

### Collecting your residence permit

You need to make an appointment to collect your residence permit from the IND. You need this document to identify yourself and prove you are allowed to live in the Netherlands.

## Tuberculosis (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 TB examination, during which your lungs will be X-rayed. This health check is needed to get your residence permit. Your university will make an appointment for you, if this applies to you.

## Municipal registration

If you are staying in the Netherlands for longer than 4 months, you have to register with your municipality. When you are registered in the Personal Records Database (BRP), you will receive a citizen service number or Burgerservicenummer (BSN). You need BSN to arrange a lot of formalities, for example, when opening a bank account or taking out health insurance.

The municipality organises the student registration together with the educational institutes in The Hague. You will need to make an appointment for student registration at the municipality.

You can find out how to make an appointment via: [www.denhaag.nl/en/moving-and-immigration/moving-to-the-hague-from-abroad/registration-procedures-for-international-students.htm](http://www.denhaag.nl/en/moving-and-immigration/moving-to-the-hague-from-abroad/registration-procedures-for-international-students.htm)



## Registration for non-residents (RNI)

At the appointment, you will need to bring:

- A valid form of identification: a passport or identity card.
- A copy of the passport or identity card (back and front)
- Proof of address. This can be a rental contract which clearly states the address (including house number and, if applicable, room number). Or written permission from the main occupant (including a copy of a valid form of identification for the person giving permission).
- For students who need a residence permit: a copy of the acknowledgement of receipt which the school received from the IND. The school will provide this document to students.

Students will receive a BSN approximately 2 to 4 weeks after registering with the municipality.

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. More information about the RNI procedure is available on the website of the municipality of The Hague: [www.denhaag.nl/en/moving-and-immigration/bsn-and-registration-as-a-non-resident-of-the-netherlands-rni.htm](http://www.denhaag.nl/en/moving-and-immigration/bsn-and-registration-as-a-non-resident-of-the-netherlands-rni.htm)

## 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 sim card
- Access social security
- Work and pay income taxes
- Get DigiD

You should keep your BSN secret. Your BSN is issued for life. Even if you leave the Netherlands for an extended period of time, your BSN will remain the same.

## DigiD

DigiD is the Dutch government's online login and identity verification 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 on [www.digid.nl/en](http://www.digid.nl/en)

## Reporting your move

If you move house or apartment during your stay 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.

## Using your driving licence

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 may use it for 185 days after registration in the Netherlands. After this period you have to take a Dutch driving test to obtain a Dutch license. Some countries are exempt from this.



# Housing

In The Hague, most universities do not have their own dormitories and 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. It is better to start your house hunt early, as you need to find an address you are allowed to register to obtain your residence permit and municipal registration.

## Budget

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

- Requesting housing via your university. Most universities work with student housing organisations like DUWO for accommodation. Universities have a limited number of reserved rooms for international and exchange students. This varies per university. Often the number of applications greatly exceeds the amount of reserved rooms available.
- Trying to find housing by yourself. We recommend signing up to various options before you even receive your offer.

Before you start your search, you should determine the budget you are prepared to pay. Student cities like The Hague, Leiden and Rotterdam can be quite expensive. You should also consider looking outside your student city. For The Hague you can consider Rijswijk or Leidschendam-Voorburg.

We have listed a rough indication of monthly rental prices in The Hague region. The prices will most likely exclude utilities, service, and internet costs:

- Room: € 350–€ 600
- Studios: € 600–€ 1000
- Apartments: € 1000+





## House search

You can look at various options:

- Non-profit housing organisations such as Room.nl. Room.nl is a platform through which housing corporations like DUWO offer students accommodation. Priority is given to students coming to the Netherlands from far away and operate on a first-come-first-serve basis. Other student housing corporations are: Vestia and Staedion.
- Commercial platforms and housing providers such as [www.huurwoning.nl](http://www.huurwoning.nl), [www.kamernet.nl](http://www.kamernet.nl), and [www.huurstunt.nl](http://www.huurstunt.nl). Keep in mind that you may need to pay for a subscription in order to react to housing opportunities.
- HousingAnywhere and RoomPlaza are booking websites for student accommodation. Mostly student to student rentals and subletting (this is only a short-term solution, you need to be able to register).
- The Social Hub, Holland2Stay, Xior, Student Housing The Hague, and Homey Housing offer student accommodation.
- Short term solutions include staying with friends or family or asking them for advice, temporary accommodation in hotels or hostels, and subletting.

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.
- Use social media to try and find flatmates. Students often use Facebook groups to offer rooms in shared apartments.
- Check [www.studyinthehague.com/living](http://www.studyinthehague.com/living) and your university's website for more tips to find housing!

## Affordable housing permit

If you rent a property from an individual and your rent is lower than € 1015.31 (excluding utilities), you may need an affordable housing permit.

For more information, visit [www.denhaag.nl/en/permits-and-exemptions/residential-permits/affordable-housing-permit.htm](http://www.denhaag.nl/en/permits-and-exemptions/residential-permits/affordable-housing-permit.htm)

## Rent benefit

The Dutch government sometimes provides rent benefit (huurtoeslag) to help cover costs. There are certain requirements that must be met. The property you are renting must have its own address, front door, kitchen and bathroom. Rent per month (excluding utilities) can be no more than € 452.20 if you are between 18 and 22, or € 808.06 if you are 23 or older. For more information, visit the website of the Dutch Tax authorities: [www.belastingdienst.nl/wps/wcm/connect/bldcontenten/belastingdienst/individuals/benefits/moving\\_to\\_the\\_netherlands/i\\_live\\_in\\_a\\_rented\\_house/i\\_live\\_in\\_a\\_rented\\_house](http://www.belastingdienst.nl/wps/wcm/connect/bldcontenten/belastingdienst/individuals/benefits/moving_to_the_netherlands/i_live_in_a_rented_house/i_live_in_a_rented_house)

If you have not found a place to live before your study starts, many universities advise 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.



## What to pay attention to when renting

When looking for housing, it is important to keep the following in mind so that you can avoid being scammed or overpaying.

- Always check the credentials of the advertiser. Make sure the room is rented via an official website or agency. Search online for reviews or warnings. Ask for photos and personal details so you can search online. If possible, meet the landlord during a viewing before accepting the offer.
- Check the property. If possible, view the property in advance or ask an acquaintance to view it 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. Make sure you can register with the municipality on that address. Ensure your contract mentions your personal details, the landlord's details, 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 your house meets the Dutch safety standards with smoke and CO2 detectors, fire escape routes and fire extinguishers.
- 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 aware that deposits can range from one month's rent to two months. The agreement is that usually rent is paid on the first day of the month.

- Be wary of landlords who are not based in the Netherlands or who ask you to pay in cash, with Western Union, MoneyGram, or who have a non-Dutch bank account (you can tell whether it is a Dutch account if the IBAN 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 should contact the police to file a report. The emergency number is 112. For other inquiries you can contact the police via 0900 88 44.
- The Huurbalie (Rental Helpdesk) is part of the Municipality of The Hague. This is the first point of contact for any issues you may have with your rental property. The helpdesk provides free advice for both tenants and landlords. The Huurbalie may direct you to the Fair Rent Team if you are having issues with your landlord concerning service charges or maintenance. You can report overdue maintenance and other issues to The Hague Housing Inspection Bureau. [www.denhaag.nl/en/moving-and-immigration/housing/rental-helpdesk-huurbalie.htm](http://www.denhaag.nl/en/moving-and-immigration/housing/rental-helpdesk-huurbalie.htm)
- Het Juridisch Loket provides free legal advice on a number of issues, including housing. Their website is in Dutch but they do offer assistance in English. [www.juridischloket.nl/](http://www.juridischloket.nl/)
- 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. [www.dutchstudentunion.nl/housinghotline/](http://www.dutchstudentunion.nl/housinghotline/)

## Utilities

In some cases, utilities (water, gas, electricity) are included in the monthly rental price. This is called 'inclusive' (*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 may need to arrange gas, water, internet, and electricity contracts. Sometimes the price is listed as 'exclusive' with the prices for utilities listed separately. Read your contract carefully to see what you need to arrange yourself. You may be free to switch to the cheapest provider or the one with the best service. Your water company is set by your geographical region. There are various websites which compare the different energy, internet, and other providers.

## What taxes should I expect to pay?

Depending on the type of property you are renting, some local taxes may apply. If you are privately renting a property and living alone, you can expect to receive bills in February. Based on your income and savings, you may be eligible for a refund. If you have an independent rental contract and your own house address, expect to be charged for:

### Waste tax (*Afvalstoffenheffing*)

This is calculated depending on the number of people registered at the same address. For one person you would need to pay € 313.32 in 2022.

### 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). For 1 person you would need to pay € 211.30 in 2022.

## Waste and recycling

Depending on where you live, you might have to use the waste containers on the street. Sometime these containers can only be accessed with a pass. Another option is that your property has wheelie bins that are regularly emptied by the municipality.

There are also large shared recycling containers for paper, glass, plastics and drink cartons. The municipality collects certain types of recycling on specific days of the year. The waste in question should be left neatly outside your house before 08:30 on the day of collection. You can find the collection days on the waste calendar of the municipality at [www.huisvuikalendar.denhaag.nl](http://www.huisvuikalendar.denhaag.nl)

Large household and garden waste can be brought to the municipal dump (called afvalbrenngstation in The Hague). It can cost money to dump certain waste items. It is also possible to ask the municipality to collect your rubbish, free of charge.



# Healthcare

The Dutch healthcare system is privatised but all citizens living or working in the Netherlands must have a basic insurance. There may be some features that can be confusing to newcomers; for example, the role of your GP (general practitioner or family doctor), how insurance works, and getting in touch with the right medical experts.

## How does the Dutch healthcare system work?

The Dutch medical system is very advanced and has up-to-date treatments. However, you must get a referral from your local GP (general practitioner or family doctor) in order to access specialist care. This means that signing up with a local GP is important.

It is mandatory to have some form of health insurance in the Netherlands. For EU students, this can be proof of your insurance status at home (even if your home country has a public healthcare system). Non-EU students receive an adapted insurance through their school. Please note that if you are not from the EU and you do not have valid health insurance, you will receive a warning letter from the CAK (a Dutch healthcare body). You will receive three warnings, after which you could be fined over € 300.

### EU students

EU students may use the insurance that they have in their home country, even if that insurance is public rather than privatised. You will need a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) to access Dutch healthcare. However, it is possible that the policy you have at home is not fully covered in the Netherlands. Some prescriptions, for example, are not covered. Before arrival you should check what your insurance covers in the Netherlands.

### Non-EU students

Students coming from outside of the EU need an adapted form of health insurance. In many cases, the first year of the insurance is arranged by the school you will be attending. After this year, you will need to extend or

change the insurance provider yourself. These adapted packages generally cost between € 300 and € 400 a year.

Some healthcare providers that offer these kind of policies include AON, Allianz, and ISI. Make sure to compare policies to get the best deal.

### 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 start working unless you provide proof that you have a Dutch health insurance policy. This usually costs around € 138 per month. If you have a lower income, you can receive health insurance benefit to help with the monthly costs.

Although the Netherlands has a privatised health insurance system, it is highly regulated by the government who set monthly premiums and costs of treatments. Most healthcare providers require that you pay the first part of medical costs (€ 385 in 2023) as 'your own risk'. After that, your insurance will cover the rest.

Most health insurance packages cover basic medical care, but not include dental, opticians, or physiotherapy. Other extensive treatments may also not be covered. Read your policy carefully and choose additional packages where necessary.

Once a year, you can change healthcare providers. This must be arranged before 31 December. You can compare policies online to find the best one for you.

## Health Insurance Benefit (Zorgtoeslag)

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

You cannot apply for Health Insurance Benefit if you are a non-EU student using an adapted insurance policy. However, if you start working in the Netherlands as a non-EU student (and so take out a Dutch health insurance), you are able to apply for the benefit.

## GP (General Practitioner, Family Doctor, or Huisarts)

Your local GP is your first point of contact in the Dutch healthcare system. Before you can seek specialised help, you need a referral from your GP. The Dutch healthcare system tries to avoid prescribing antibiotics, and so you may be asked to come back a second time before your GP will give them to you.

You should sign up with the GP in your area. It is advised to sign up with the one closest to you, however, some GPs have waiting lists. You can find the closest GP office by using a listing website, such as [www.zorgkaartnederland.nl/huisarts](http://www.zorgkaartnederland.nl/huisarts)

The Hague has two special student general practitioners: StudentDoc and Biking Doctors The Hague. They offer specialised services for students around the city centre.

## GP care after hours

If you need to speak to or visit a GP after hours, you can contact the Hadoks service. They have two medical help desks (*huisartsenpost*): one in the city and one in Leidschendam:

### Hagaziekenhuis

Charlotte Jacobslaan 10  
2545 AB, The Hague  
+31(0)70 210 20 60

### HMC Westeinde

Lijnbaan 32  
2512VA, The Hague  
+31(0)70 346 96 69

### HMC Antoniushove

Burg. Banninglaan 1  
2262BA, Leidschendam  
+31(0)88 979 79 00

## 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 '*SEH*'.

### SEH Hagaziekenhuis

Charlotte Jacobslaan 10  
2545 AB, The Hague  
+31(0)70 210 20 60

### SEH HMC Westeinde

Westeinde 150  
2512HH, The Hague  
+31(0)70 346 96 69

## Other types of healthcare: dentist, optician, physiotherapy

Other types of healthcare are not generally 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 physical therapy providers. You may be asked to pay for your treatment after your appointment.

## Mental Health

Educational institutes offer some sort of mental health care support. For example, if you feel stressed, depressed, lonely, unsafe or suffer from other anxieties, you can contact your international office, welfare officer, or student counsellor. Welfare officers may also be able to guide you through the Dutch medical system to the best possible help.

There are public and private psychologists available in the Netherlands. You need a referral from your GP if you want to use a public therapist. They are often (partially) covered by your health insurance, however, there are long waiting lists. You do not need a referral to go to a private psychologist and they often do not have waiting lists. However, you will need to pay for this yourself



# Banking and Finance

## Opening a bank account

It is advisable to open a Dutch bank account as many organisations ask for one if you want to use their services. Credit cards are not widely accepted in the Netherlands, but many EU bank cards are accepted. If you come from a non-EU/EEA country, you should arrange a Dutch bank account.

In order to open a 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. Some student-friendly banks with offices include ING, ABN Amro, and Rabobank. You can also opt for an online bank such as Bunq or Bitsafe.

## What you need to open a bank account

- Admission letter or student registration statement

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- Proof of your municipal registration, address and citizen service number or BSN

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- Valid form of identification (passport or EU identity card)

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- If Non-EU: a residence permit or IND residence approval letter

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

Setting up a Dutch bank account does not take long. 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.



## National Taxes

Income tax and social security contributions are usually deducted and paid by your employer. Your payslip should clearly show how much money has been paid in taxes in a month.

Everyone in the Netherlands must also complete a yearly tax return. For your first year in the Netherlands, you will have to use a paper 'M form'. This form is quite long, but if you only have one source of income, you do not need to fill in every page. There are lots of tax consultants that can help, and also various webinars available online about the 'M form'. You will receive this form in the mail.

After your first year in the Netherlands you can complete an online tax return. You do this by logging into the Tax Authority (*belastingdienst*) website or app with your DigiD.

The tax office will then confirm your tax return and inform you if you need to pay more taxes, or whether you will receive a refund. It is important to note that the Dutch tax office does not refund or require you to pay discrepancies for amounts under € 50.

Returns can be sent in from 1 January, and you have until 1 May to complete your yearly return. For your first year's tax return, you have an extended deadline until 1 July, and you can always ask the Belastingdienst for an extension.

## Insurance

The only mandatory insurances in the Netherlands are health insurance (see healthcare section) and, if you own a car, car insurance.

However, many Dutch people choose to take out personal liability insurance in

case they accidentally damage someone's property (for example). Personal liability insurance is often very cheap, and available through your bank or a general insurance company. Some employers may ask you to take out this insurance.

Other types of insurance available in the Netherlands include home and home contents insurance. Your landlord may ask you to take out home contents insurance in your rented property. Both types of insurance are readily available through banks and insurance agencies.

## Benefits (Toeslagen)

As a taxpayer in the Netherlands, you may be entitled to various benefits to help with the cost of health insurance, housing, childcare, and more. Some of these are listed below. You can find out more information on the websites of the UWV (worker's agency), SVB (social insurance agency), and Belastingdienst (tax authority):

<b>Zorgtoeslag</b>	Financial aid to cover the costs of your health insurance (see healthcare section)
<b>Huurtoeslag</b>	Financial aid to help cover the costs of your rent (please see the housing section)
<b>Werkloosheidsuitkering</b>	Unemployment benefit

Other benefits may include financial aid for people with long-term medical conditions or disabilities, and for those who have just lost their spouse.



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# Work and career

## Working as a student

Many students take up part-time jobs to help cover their daily expenses. Popular jobs include working in bars, restaurants, food or package delivery, or working for the university. In the Netherlands it is common to find a job via an employment agency.

Please note that students who decide to work must take out Dutch basic health insurance, pay taxes, and comply with work regulations. In general, students work between 8-16 hours a week so they can continue to get the most out of their study programme and life.

### I have an EU nationality

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

### I have a non-EU nationality

Non-EU students in the Netherlands must have a student residence permit. On the back of the residence document, you will find information about working in the Netherlands. Non-EU students may work:

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

Non-EU students also require a work permit if they want to work in the Netherlands. This is a fairly uncompliated process, and the application is submitted by your employer at the UWV (Dutch Employment Agency).

EU and Non-EU students are allowed to be self-employed during their studies. There are no restrictions on how many hours you work. 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 do 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 your university).

Lots of study programmes in the Netherlands offer the chance to students to do an internship (usually up to 20 credits). Different programmes have different means of applying for internships, however, they will most likely take place in the first six months of the year. It is a competitive market and you may not always find the type of internship you wanted.

There are a large numbers of English-language internships available on websites of organisations such as The Hague Humanity Hub, The Hague Tech, Apollo 14 or The Hague Security Delta and on [www.jobs.workinrotterdamthehague.org](http://www.jobs.workinrotterdamthehague.org)

## Finding a job after you graduate

In the Netherlands it is relatively easy to find a job as an international graduate. As international city of Peace and Justice and seat of the Dutch government, The Hague is home to many international organisations, multinational companies, innovative start-ups and NGOs. For many knowledge-based jobs, you do not necessarily have to speak Dutch.

Of course, finding a job can still be a challenging process. Searching for and applying to different positions can take time and energy. Luckily there are plenty of places in The Hague region to find help, get advice, and obtain skills to boost your CV.

The Hague is part of the Randstad, a large urbanized area home to over 8.5 million people. This area is well connected in terms of public transport and roads. If you do not mind commuting, there are more job opportunities in the Randstad.

## Orientation Year permit 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/or 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, however, the process of applying for this permit

changes if you leave the Netherlands. One of the advantages of the Orientation Year permit is that, when you find a job, you can apply for the Highly Skilled Migrant permit. This means that you are as competitive on the labour market as a graduate with Dutch or EU citizenship.

For more information on the Orientation Year Permit, head to the IND website: [www.ind.nl/en/residence-permits/work/residence-permit-for-orientation-year](http://www.ind.nl/en/residence-permits/work/residence-permit-for-orientation-year)

If you would like to take advantage of the Orientation Year permit right after your graduation, you must make sure to apply for it before your student permit expires.

Read more on The Hague's economic sectors on our website: [www.thehagueinternationalcentre.nl/working-in-the-hague-region](http://www.thehagueinternationalcentre.nl/working-in-the-hague-region)

For economic sectors in other Dutch cities you can visit the national Welcome to NL website: [www.welcome-to-nl.nl/](http://www.welcome-to-nl.nl/)

If you want to stay updated on local career events for internationals, follow The Hague International Centre on LinkedIn or sign up for our newsletter.

## Top Sectors in The Hague Region

**New Energy** The Hague region is a central point for innovative, low and zero-carbon ways of producing energy. The Hague is home to many multinational energy companies, including their support and engineering businesses. This means that there are many stimulating places to work in The Hague if you are interested in cleaner energy.

**IT & Technology** IT & Technology The Hague region is home to a mixture of excellent universities (including Delft University of Technology), start-up hubs, and global tech companies, making it an established centre for IT and tech innovation. Companies, research institutes, and the government work together to promote innovation. This sector is always looking for new talent.

**Legal & Policy** The Hague is the international city of justice and peace and has been associated with international human rights. As the seat of the Dutch government, the International Court of Justice, Europol, and more other international organisations, The Hague is the place for anyone interested in making a difference. Accordingly, there is a high concentration of legal scholars, practices, innovations centres, and more.

**Finance** Investment and funding are essential for innovation and growth. The Hague has an established financial centre, hosting many multinational headquarters such as Nationale-Nederlanden, Aegon, and FMO. Together with key financial institutions in The Hague region, they create a foundation and healthy business climate for businesses and start-ups to build upon.

**Cybersecurity** This sector presents an interesting crossover between several areas in which The Hague already plays an important part. Because it has such a strong IT and technology sector, there is a unique ecosystem of cyber-related companies in The Hague, creating initiatives and governing global cybersecurity concerns.

**NGO's and Impact** The Hague is the European heart for non-governmental organisations as there are hundreds of NGO's in the city. In The Hague entrepreneurs, governmental institutions, academics, and businesses come together to create a better, safer, and more just world. The city is so successful in this that it is sometimes called Impact City.

## Job portals and recruiters

There are large numbers of job portals and multilingual recruiters that can help you find a job after you graduate. For more information, and direct links to the various portals, check out our website: [www.thehagueinternationalcentre.nl/looking-for-a-job-in-the-netherlands](http://www.thehagueinternationalcentre.nl/looking-for-a-job-in-the-netherlands)

## Top Tips when applying

### Open applications

In the Netherlands it is quite normal to send a speculative application to a company or organisation that you would like to work for. Lots of companies even have a specific 'open application' tab on their recruitment page. If someone has useful skills and motivation, then a position will be found for them (rather than the other way around), so if a company finds your CV interesting you might be invited to an interview!

### Networking

Whilst almost every company and institution will post their vacancies on their own job pages, on local job portals, with multilingual recruiters, and on LinkedIn, they will also recruit 'from their own network'. This means that if you are speaking to someone who works at a company you would like to work for, do not be afraid to mention that you are looking for a job and would like to learn more about their organisation.

### Focus on what you can offer

Lots of Dutch employers place a strong emphasis on individual and/or unique skills. For example, if you speak a non-European language, emphasise that you

could help breaking into new markets or provide information to a diverse group of people. If you are an account manager, but you also have experience with business development, mention it! Many Dutch employers love crossover skills.

### Make it memorable

When applying for jobs, take some time to make sure that your CV and motivation letter are tailored to the position. Adding unique elements can help you stand out as well. Whether you add a colour scheme, find a way to present your skills, or anything else that demonstrates your personality.

### Volunteering, traineeships, etc.

If have just graduated, also look into whether a company offers traineeships or volunteer positions. Traineeships allow you to work and learn during a fixed period. Many organisations also offer volunteer opportunities which could boost your CV.

### Make use of your internships

If you're currently studying and your course has an internship element, it is a good idea to take it. Lots of people in the Netherlands use their in-study internship as a stepping stone into employment when they graduate. Your university or college likely has a network that you can access through their career centres.

## Volunteering

It is important to note that volunteering has a different status in the Netherlands to many countries. Not only are volunteers often offered a small financial

# No Dutch? No problem. Volunteer!

Over 300 volunteer jobs suitable for non-Dutch speakers.



**VOLUNTEER THE HAGUE PROJECT HELPS ENGLISH SPEAKING RESIDENTS CONNECT WITH LOCAL NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS.**



[volunteertehague.nl](http://volunteertehague.nl)





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, and it can be a very rewarding experience.

You do not need a work permit to volunteer, either. English-language volunteering vacancies in The Hague can be found at [www.volunteerthehague.nl](http://www.volunteerthehague.nl)

## Learning Dutch

While there are plenty of people working in the Netherlands that do not speak Dutch, it could be beneficial in your job search. There are plenty of opportunities to learn Dutch in The Hague region, and your university may offer a free or discounted course to help get you started.

You can also check out the Taalhuis Den Haag for more opportunities to learn and practice Dutch: [www.taalhuisdenhaag.nl](http://www.taalhuisdenhaag.nl)

## Entrepreneurship

The Netherlands is a good place for entrepreneurs. The process of starting-up a business is simple, and there are many start-up hubs that can help you along the way. They can offer discounted office space, advice, and provide assistance when looking for financing. The Hague Business Agency can help guide you in the process.

These are some of the start-up hubs in The Hague region:

### **Apollo 14**

A hub dedicated to social enterprise and 'impact' businesses.

### **The Hague Humanity Hub**

A hub dedicated to NGO's and the next generation of globally-relevant organisations.

### **The Hague Tech**

A hub dedicated to IT, technology, and all things digital.

### **Technology Park Ypenburg**

A hub located at the home of Dutch flight, the former Fokker campus, and dedicated to aerospace innovation and high-tech business.

### **YES!Delft**

A hub dedicated to AI and Blockchain, with two campuses in Delft and The Hague.

## Start-Up in Residence and Essential Start-Up Personnel Permit

The IND collaborates with the Dutch Enterprise Agency (RVO) to allow entrepreneurs to come to the Netherlands and begin their start-ups. If they want to start their business in the Netherlands, they will receive a residence permit. There is also a permit available for essential workers from outside the EU that bring expertise to start-ups. Both permits have their own requirements, listed on the IND website.



# Welcome to The Hague.

Royal city by the sea

◆ The City  
The Beach  
The **Hague.**

[denhaag.com](http://denhaag.com)



# Student Associations

A good way to meet people during your studies and engage in social activities, is by joining a student or study association. Student associations are for all students, regardless of field of study. Study associations are for students enrolled in specific programmes.

## Student Associations

Some student associations include:

- **Afro Student Association:** a safe space free from discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- **AIESEC:** global network promoting young leadership.
- **Amnesty International Student Group:** engaging people in the fight for human rights.
- **Enactus HHS:** bringing together students, academics, and business leaders for a more sustainable world.
- **Erasmus Student Network:** supporting international students across Europe.
- **H.G.S.V. Philautia:** LGBTQ+ student association.
- **H.S.R.V. Pelargos:** rowing association.
- **Interaccess NL:** an association for and by international students.
- **Initiatives of change (Casa Amalia):** global network of young people committed to a peaceful, just, and sustainable world.

- **Senti Questo:** international student association of the Hotelschool in The Hague.
- **The Hague Model United Nations Society (MUNOTH):** learn more about the field of United Nations debating.
- **Tribez:** empowering and educating students with African heritage or affinity.
- **H.S.S.O. Valerius:** The Hague's student orchestra.

## Study Associations

Study associations are a good place to meet other students who follow the same programme. These associations host social events, but they usually also give tips and tricks related to your studies, and sometimes can get you discounts on books. Check your programme to see which study association is linked to it.



# important information

## Emergency Numbers

Police, ambulance, and the fire brigade:  
**112**

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Suicidal thoughts:  
**113**

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

### Non-emergency medical care

In the case of a medical emergency, always call **112**. However, if the situation is not life-threatening but you would like to speak to a doctor, you can call your GP's office (during office hours). Outside of office hours, you can reach a special GP line. In The Hague you can ring 'Hadoks' at **+31(0)70 346 96 69**.

### Emergency Sirens

There are around 4,200 emergency sirens located around the Netherlands. Every first Monday of the month at 12:00, the sirens are tested. NL-Alerts (emergency text messages) are also used in case there is an emergency in your area. If you hear the air sirens on any other day or time beside the first Monday of the month at 12:00, you should go home and turn on the TV or radio for updates.

## Country and Area Codes

Country Code for the Netherlands::  
**+31**

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Dutch mobile phone prefix:  
**06**

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Area code for The Hague:  
**070**

## Currency & daily payments

The Netherlands, like many other EU countries, uses the **Euro**. Many places accept both cash and card. Since COVID-19, however, more and more places are becoming cash-free. Contactless or mobile phone-based payments are widely accepted. Although most places accept card, they do not accept Visa, American Express, Mastercard, or other credit cards. Dutch bank cards will most often be Maestro.

## Time zones

The Netherlands is located in the Central European time zone (CET). This is one hour after Greenwich Mean Time (GMT +1). The Netherlands is part Summer and Winter time. In the spring the clocks are set forward by one hour and in winter the clocks are set back.

## Seasons and weather

The Netherlands has a temperate maritime climate. This means that winters are usually mild and summers are relatively cool. Rainfall is distributed throughout the year, so there are no clear dry or wet seasons. In the winter temperatures average between 3 and 6 degrees Celsius, and summer temperatures average between 17 and 20 degrees Celsius. In recent years, the Netherlands has been getting warmer. There are fewer days of snow in January and February, North Sea storms are getting more violent in autumn and spring, and there are more tropical days in the summer.

## Important dates and festivals

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.



<b>New Year's Day (Nieuwjaarsdag)</b>	1 January
<b>Good Friday (Goede Vrijdag)</b>	7 April 2023 / 29 March 2024 (not every employer gives the day off work)
<b>Easter Sunday (Eerste Paasdag)</b>	9 April 2023 / 31 March 2024
<b>Easter Monday (Tweede Paasdag)</b>	10 April 2023 / 1 April 2024
<b>King's Day (Koningsdag)</b>	27 April
<b>Liberation Day (Bevrijdingsdag)</b>	5 May (only a day off work once every five years)
<b>Ascension Day (Hemelvaartsdag)</b>	18 May 2023 / 9 May 2024
<b>Pentecost (Pinksteren)</b>	28 May 2023 / 19 May 2024
<b>Christmas Day and Boxing Day (Eerste en Tweede Kerstdag)</b>	25 December and 26 December

## Cultural do's and don'ts

### Punctuality

Many Dutch people schedule their social calendars weeks in advance. Sometimes it may seem that the Dutch attribute very little time to some of their social events. Because of this, punctuality is greatly appreciated.

### Smoking

Many places in the Netherlands have designated non-smoking (*rookvrij*) areas, including many universities, colleges, and schools. Some Dutch may let you know before they light up a cigarette.

### Meeting people

It is common for the Dutch to take initiative when introducing themselves. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the initial handshake was very important, especially in formal settings. When meeting family or certain acquaintances, it can also be common to greet them with a kiss on each cheek.

### Distance

Dutch people may be used to a more personal, social, and emotional distance than people from non-Dutch cultures.

### Directness

Many Dutch people pride themselves on their (sometimes brutal) honesty. The Dutch dub this 'nuchterheid', which roughly translates to soberness. For example, if someone dislikes an idea you should expect the Dutch to say so, but usually they do give you a reason.

### Consensus

In the Netherlands it is important to reach a consensus in social and public life. This is because the Dutch political system is based on consensus. It is, therefore, common to involve everyone in the decision-making process.

### Birthdays

The Dutch don't only congratulate the person having their birthday, but congratulate their friends and family as well. Many Dutch people keep track of their friends' and family members' birthdays using a calendar kept on the back of the toilet door.

### Dinners

If a Dutch person invites you to dinner, they will expect you to be punctual. If you invite Dutch friends or colleagues over, they will be (very) on time. It is generally custom to bring a present to dinner, either something to eat, flowers, or something to drink. If you bring wine, there is a good chance that the bottle will not be opened that evening.

Before eating, the host often raises their glass as a toast. You will most likely be offered seconds, however, only after everyone has finished their first plate.

### Bills and tipping

If you enjoyed your meal and the service provided, it is normal to tip 5-10%. Famously, the Dutch like to split the bill (going Dutch). One way they do this is having one person pay who then sends everyone else a Tikkie (pay-back app). However, if someone wants to pay, they will say so before you start the meal or drinks.



# Getting around

## Public transport

The Netherlands has an excellent public transport system, with trains, trams, and buses available. 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 recognisable. Various other companies handle local routes, including HTM for trams in The Hague and RET for metros.

Buses are operated by a range of companies, and some cities (such as Rotterdam) also have water taxis.

The best way to check your fastest commute is through the NS app, 9292 ([www.9292.nl/en](http://www.9292.nl/en)), or Google Maps.

## OV-Chipkaart

You can purchase tickets from machines in stations, or online, but if you are staying in the Netherlands for a longer period of time, it would be a good idea to get a personal public transport card (OV-Chipkaart). These can be used on all forms of public transport, by checking in at the station or on the bus.

There are two types of OV-Chipkaart:

- Blue: This is an anonymous card that you can get at a ticket office, and add credit to through ticket machines.
- Yellow: This is personal card, linked to an online account. These cards can be used for different subscriptions.

For more information, head to [www.ovchipkaart.nl/en](http://www.ovchipkaart.nl/en)

## Bicycles

The Netherlands is known as a biking country, and there are more bicycles than people! Bike infrastructure is very advanced in the Netherlands, with many streets having separate bike lanes. Bike lanes are often made from red bricks or red tarmac (and usually have the outline of a bike painted on it).

You can buy a 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 your bike, remember to lock it to something (for example a bike rack or lamp post).

Swapfiets is a popular choice with students (these are the bikes with the blue front wheel). This is a monthly subscription for a bike which includes repairs.

Even if you prefer public transport, many train stations have multi-level bike parking. Or you can rent a bike from the station with your OV-Chipkaart.

## Driving

You may use a driving license from another EU member state in the Netherlands until it expires. If you have a non-EU driving license, you can use it for 185 days after you register in the Netherlands. After that you will have to take a Dutch driving test and obtain a Dutch license.

# How can The Hague International Centre help you settle in?

The Hague International Centre is your first point of contact as international in The Hague region. You can reach out to us if you have any questions while living in The Hague. Whether you decide to stay after your studies or not! Check our website for updates on how things work in the Netherlands or where you can go for help in our service providers section. Sign up for our newsletter or follow us on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or Instagram. Visit our helpdesk in City Hall to ask your question directly. We also organise regular events to help international newcomers settle in The Hague region.



## Our events include:

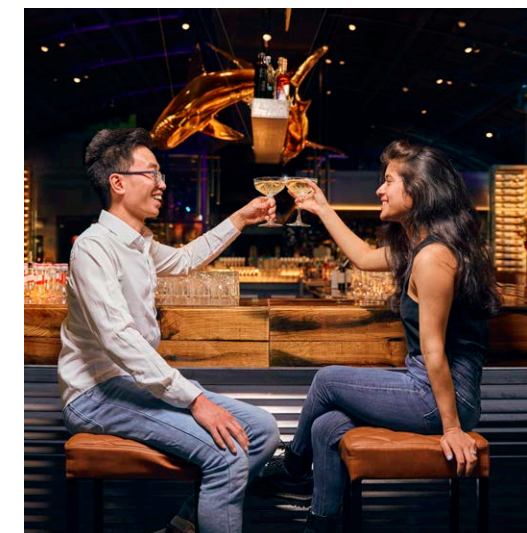
We host various networking events which also discuss certain topics such as taxes, healthcare, housing, and employment in collaboration with our partners. Once a year, we organise the Feel at Home Fair to connect the international community to sport, social and community clubs and networks in the region.

Sign up for our newsletter and keep an eye on our website for events!



## City Events

For everything that is going on in The Hague, make sure to check out [www.denhaag.com](http://www.denhaag.com), which showcases the best in culture, lifestyle, and more.



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