

WHEN IN THE NETHERLANDS..

YOUR PRACTICAL SURVIVAL GUIDE



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1. WELCOME!

First, a warm welcome to the Netherlands and Van Hall Larenstein (VHL) University of Applied Sciences on behalf of the International Affairs team.

This guide informs you about what you should take care of and what you should know.

We want to guarantee that you have a smooth start at VHL.

Do you still have questions? Send us an e-mail or give us a call!

Enjoy your International adventure!

VHL International Affairs

1.1 Contact details VHL

Location Leeuwarden
Agora 1
8934 CJ Leeuwarden

Location Velp
Larensteinselaan 26a
6882 CT Velp

☎ Reception desk:
+31 58 284 61 00

☎ Reception desk:
+31 26 369 56 95

Websites

ENG : vhuas.com

GER : vhuas.de

Social media

📷 [Instagram](#)

📘 [Facebook](#)

🌐 [LinkedIn](#)

✉ **Admissions department:** info-international@hvhl.nl

✉ **Erasmus+:** erasmus@hvhl.nl

✉ **Incoming students:** international@hvhl.nl

🌐 Information for new students: vhuas.com/enrolled

Emergency services phone numbers

For emergencies (police, ambulance, fire department): 112

For non-emergencies (police): 0900 8844

1.2 International Affairs

The support and coordination of international activities is managed by the international Affairs team. Among our duties are the responsibility for incoming and outgoing students, housing, visa matters, insurance and international partners. Our team is divided into following units: mobility team (incoming students and outgoing students), policy, communication, recruitment/marketing. We can help you with problems and want to make sure you have a wonderful exchange experience!

Manager: Jannet Lavalette



2. CHECKLIST

Make sure to tick all boxes to ensure a smooth start of your studies!

General

- Visa and Residence permit (non-EU/EEA)
- Housing (contract)
- Registered at city hall (stay longer than 4 months)
- Health insurance
- Dutch bank account
- Mobile phone (Dutch)
- Ov-chipkaart/OVpay (public transport card)
- Bicycle
- Laptop + Wi-Fi
- Student sports card
- Go to the international student day
- Meeting other international students!

VHL

- Wi-Fi VHL
- Student account
- Student card

More information? Check vhl.uas.com/enrolled



3. STUDENT AT VHL

3.1 Wi-Fi (VHL)

Phone

1. Go to Settings and choose the HVHL-user network
2. Enter your VHL e-mail and password
3. Select PEAP for the EAP method; do not validate the CA-Certificate
4. Connect to the Wi-Fi network
5. A pop-up will appear: click on it and agree to the terms and conditions If you no pop-up appears, open your web browser, visit nu.nl and agree to the terms and conditions
6. Wait until you are connected to the Wi-Fi

Windows (laptop/computer)

1. Open the Wi-Fi bar and choose the HVHL-user network
2. Enter your VHL e-mail and password
3. Choose Connect when the pop-up appears
4. Open your web browser, visit nu.nl and agree to the terms and conditions
5. Wait until you are connected to the Wi-Fi

Questions or problems with setting up your devices? Go to the IT desk.

3.2 VHL student account

In order to participate from the very beginning, you will need a VHL account. This account grants you access to all the digital facilities at VHL. Consider your class schedule and the digital learning environment. Your VHL account consists of an e-mail address: `firstname.lastname@hvhl.nl` and a password you set yourself. From the start of your programme, VHL will only send you information via this e-mail address.

IMPORTANT: We will send you the information to activate your VHL account when your enrolment is complete. Do you still need to submit a language test, your diploma or pay your tuition fees? Do so as soon as possible!

3.3 Student card

At the beginning of the academic year, we will create your VHL student card. The card bears your photo and your student number, which is your identification number at VHL. This card is also your entry ticket to all the facilities at VHL, such as taking classes, sitting exams, borrowing books, printing documents and using sports facilities. You can pick up your student card at the servicepoint.

3.4 Student counselling

There are times when you get stuck in your studies or private life. If this happens, do not hesitate to make an appointment with one of the student counsellors. In a one-on-one meeting, a student counsellor will offer you information, advice, guidance or a second opinion on subjects related to your studies, your academic career or personal issues. Student counsellors have a duty of confidentiality. You can make an appointment with a student counsellor at the servicepoint or online.

3.5 Servicepoint

The Servicepoint is the name of the student services information desk at VHL. If you have questions about your enrolment, tuition fees, VHL account and related matters, visit them for more information. The servicepoint is open daily between 09.00 and 16.30.

✉ servicepoint@hvhl.nl

☎ +31 26 369 58 58

3.6 Student associations

Join the international student association, or one from your study programme. For more information check:

Velp: vhluas.com/study/study-in-velp

Leeuwarden: vhluas.com/study/study-in-leeuwarden



4. LIFE IN THE NETHERLANDS

4.1 Visa & residence permit for non-EU/EEA students

VISA

Students with a non-EU nationality require an entry visa and/or resident permit. VHL will apply for a study visa on behalf of non-EU students.

Residence permit

After your arrival, International Affairs will send you the invitation letter from IND (Dutch Immigration Office) with which you can collect your residence permit. Once you have received the letter you can make an appointment.

TBC test for visa students

For most non-EU nationalities, a tuberculosis (TBC) test is required, to be administered within 3 months after arrival.

Within a month of arrival, you will receive an invitation for a TBC test at the hospital. This test – a chest X-ray – is necessary to maintain your residence permit. You must bring your passport and a filled in TB form to the appointment at the hospital.

IMPORTANT: Your visa will be withdrawn by the Dutch Immigration Services (IND) if you do not consent to the TBC test.

4.2 City hall

Everyone staying in the Netherlands for 4 months or longer must be registered in the municipal personal records database (known as the BRP) and obtain a citizen service number (BSN). You must register at the city hall of the city where you reside as soon as possible after your arrival. In the introduction week and on www.vhluas.com/enrolled, you will receive more information on how to register for an appointment.

What to bring:

- A valid passport or identity card
- Rental or purchase agreement (housing contract)
- Only for non-EU students: your Dutch residence permit (recommended), your passport with visa stamp (MVV)
- If you are moving to the Netherlands from the Netherlands Antilles or Aruba: proof of deregistration from the PIVA.

Citizen Service Number

(In Dutch: Burger Service Nummer, BSN)

Your BSN will be issued after your city hall appointment.

You will need your BSN to open a bank account, arrange health insurance and in your interactions with government bodies.

IMPORTANT for non-EU students: If you do not register at city hall, your residence permit will be withdrawn by the IND.

Addresses city halls

Arnhem

Koningstraat 38
6811 DG Arnhem

Servicecentrum Velp

De Overtuin 6,
6881 TT Velp

Leeuwarden

Oldehoofsterkerkhof 2
8911 DH Leeuwarden



4.3 Bank account

Many banks offer free student bank accounts. You can start up your application online. Typically, you should bring the following documents:

- Proof of address in the Netherlands
- Formal identification (passport or ID card)

Some banks may request any of these documents:

- Letter of registration as a citizen of the municipality (BRP record) from the city hall.
- BSN (Citizen Service Number): if you do not have it yet, the bank should allow you to hand it in as soon as you receive it from the city hall.
- Residence permit for non-EU students: if you do not have it yet, the bank should allow you to hand it in as soon as you receive it.

 **Dutch banks: [lamexpat.nl](https://www.lamexpat.nl)**

IMPORTANT: Students younger than 18 years may not open a bank account in their own name. Contact Team International Affairs for advice on access to your finances.

4.4 (public) Transportation OV-chipkaart/OVpay

The OV-chipkaart (public transport chip card) is the payment method for train, bus, tram and metro in the Netherlands. An alternative is to check in and out with your contactless debit card, credit card or mobile phone which is called OVpay. Check the website of OV-chipkaart for all options. It is also possible to buy a paper train ticket at the vending machine or ticket office; you can purchase bus tickets with the bus driver.

 **[ov-chipkaart.nl/en](https://www.ov-chipkaart.nl/en)**

Public transportation in the Netherlands is well-organised but it is not cheap. Consult the following websites for schedules, prices, travel with discount and routes:

 **[9292.nl/en](https://www.9292.nl/en)** (train, bus, metro)

 **[ns.nl/en](https://www.ns.nl/en)** (train)

Bicycle (the real Dutch travel experience)

The Netherlands is the so-called bicycle capital of the world, with upwards of 20 million bicycles for a population of 17 million: more than one bike for every person! The bicycle is used as a mode of transport so not only for sports. The Netherlands is a relatively densely populated and very flat country, which means that journey distances tend to be short, even between towns. There are cycle paths and signposted cycle routes everywhere so you don't have to share the road with fast moving cars.

Tips and advice to buy a bicycle

- Do not buy an expensive bicycle! Buy one second-hand
- Search online for social media marketplaces or second-hand sellers
- Ask fellow students where they got their bicycle
- Check if gears, brakes and the lock are all working
- Check if you need to buy bicycle lights and a lock separately

IMPORTANT: If you have bought a bicycle, always lock it! Unlocked bicycles will most likely be stolen: purchase a second lock if you use a bicycle in the city for extra security.



4.5 Health care

Non-European students

VHL will arrange and help non-EU students with health insurance.

EU students

We advise EU students to check whether your insurance policy in your home country covers your stay in the Netherlands. The Netherlands has agreements regarding health insurance with most European countries. If you are insured under the national health insurance scheme of one of these countries, your insurance company can provide you with either an international declaration form or a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). Make sure to bring these with you, as you will need them when you see a doctor. Make sure that all documents are translated into Dutch or English.

If you are not covered under the public health insurance of the Netherlands or your home country, you will need to take out private health insurance. There are special policies available for international students in the Netherlands.

 studyinnl.org/plan-your-stay/insurance

Reimbursement of medical expenses

There are costs involved with medical or dental appointments and treatments. In most cases, you need to pay in cash for any medical or dental appointment and treatment. Depending on the type of treatment and the insurance policy, these can either fully or partly be reimbursed or not at all. In any case, be sure to keep the invoice of your medical or dental expenses, because you will have to submit it with your claim form to your insurance company for reimbursement. Always remember to keep a copy of your invoices and claims. The insurance company requires you to hold on to your original invoice(s) for at least a year. They may ask you to send in the original invoices at a later stage. Check your insurance company's website for more information.

4.6 Health

Emergency care

In case you are in immediate need of an ambulance, the police or the fire brigade, call 112. This is the national toll-free emergency phone number. If there is no emergency, the general number for police is: 0900 8844.

Family doctor/General Practitioner

If you are in need of medical help, you schedule an appointment with a General Practitioner (GP = family doctor) located as close as possible to your student accommodation. Do not go to the Emergency Room at a hospital, unless there is an emergency. If the GP thinks that further medical examination is necessary, they will refer you to a specialist, often located near your student accommodation. This process is customary in the Netherlands.

General Practitioners Arnhem

Huisartsenpraktijk Presikhaaf

Volkerakstraat 183
6826 GV Arnhem

 026 3844333 (when calling, option 3)

 huisartsenpraktijkpresikhaaf.praktijkinfo.nl

Huisartsenpraktijk Velp

Rozendaalseaan 34, 6881 LD Velp

 026-3634500

 huisartsenvelp.onzehuisartsen.nl

The website moetiknaardedokter.nl (do I need to see a doctor?) can help you determine whether you need to see a doctor and if so, when.

 moetiknaardedokter.nl/en

General Practitioner Leeuwarden

Gezondheidscentrum Arts en Zorg Leeuwarden

Sixmastraat 22,
8932 PA Leeuwarden

☎ 058 216 4969

🌐 artsenzorg.nl/vind-uw-praktijk/leeuwarden

If you are in need of medical help outside regular office hours or on weekends and holidays, you need to contact the so called 'huisartsenpost'. They have a rotating schedule during which somebody always has to be on-call. Therefore it is essential that you contact them by phone first to request an appointment!

Arnhem

Coöperatieve Huisartsendienst
Rijnstate Hospital
Wagnerlaan 55
6815 AD Arnhem
☎ 0900 1598

Leeuwarden

Dokterswacht Friesland - Huisartsenpost Leeuwarden
Medisch Centrum Leeuwarden
Henri Dunantweg 2,
8934 AD Leeuwarden
☎ 0900 112 7 112
🌐 dokterswacht.nl

Hospitals (In Dutch: ziekenhuis)

Arnhem

Ziekenhuis Rijnstate
Wagnerlaan 55
6815 AD Arnhem
☎ 088 0058888

Leeuwarden

Medisch centrum Leeuwarden
Henri Dunantweg 2
8934 AD Leeuwarden
☎ 058 286 66 66

Personal problems

If you are experiencing personal problems of a psychological nature, you can always go to your student counsellor for help or you can ask a general practitioner for advice. They can help you to visit a psychologist or therapist.

Dental care (In Dutch: tandarts)

If you need to visit a dentist, you can select one on www.tandarts.nl. To select a dentist you enter either 'Velp' or 'Arnhem' or 'Leeuwarden' under 'woonplaats'. Dentists preceded by a green check mark will accept new patients. For emergency and weekend treatment you can contact the dentist on duty. The treatment has to be paid in cash.

IMPORTANT: Make sure to cancel your medical appointments in case you cannot make it. You will be charged for an unattended visit if you do not inform the doctor at least 24 hours in advance!



5. SPEED COURSE DUTCH

5.1 Dutch words

A few simple sentences to start with:

- Hi/hello, how are you?
- Hoi/hallo, hoe gaat het met je?**
- Good morning
- Goedemorgen**
- Goodbye
- Tot ziens**
- I only speak a few Dutch words.
- Ik spreek maar een klein beetje Nederlands.**
- Would you please repeat this slowly?
- Wilt u dat nog eens langzaam herhalen?**
- Excuse me, where do I find the tram or bus stop?
- Weet u waar de tram- of bushalte is?**
- Can I have a coffee/tea/beer/etc. please?
- Mag ik een koffie/thee/biertje/etc. van u?**
- Where can I find the town hall?
- Ik zoek het gemeentehuis?**
- Is there a supermarket in the neighbourhood?
- Is hier een supermarkt in de buurt?**
- I don't eat meat/fish.
- Ik eet geen vlees/vis.**
- Could you tell me the directions to the university?
- Kunt u mij vertellen hoe ik bij de universiteit kom?**
- Two beers please?
- Mag ik twee bier?**
- Can I get you something to drink?
- Wil je ook iets drinken?**
- How much is this?
- Hoeveel kost dat?**
- Do you want to come along to the cinema/movies?
- Ga je mee naar de film?**
- I am going out tonight.
- Ik ga vanavond uit.**
- I am in my first/second/third/fourth year.
- Ik zit in mijn eerste/tweede/derde/vierde jaar.**
- I will graduate in six months.
- Ik studeer over zes maanden af.**

5.2 Dutch food

Dutch food you have to try at least once

- **Stamppot** (see Dutch meal)
- **Kroket**: beef croquette
- **Haring**: raw fish
- **Oliebollen**: dough traditionally served on New Year's Eve
- **Drop**: black candy made from licorice
- **Stroopwafels**: waffle/cookie of syrup
- **Rookworst** at Hema: smoked sausage at Hema (store)
- **Hagelslag**: chocolate sprinkles eaten as a bread topping.

Dutch meal

A basic Dutch diner Stamppot, a mashed dish served as a complete meal, is a popular and cheap Dutch winter dish. The basic ingredient is a floury potato cooked with either a root vegetable like carrot (hutspot), cabbage (zuurkool) or mashed with uncooked finer leaved vegetables like endive (andijvie- stamp- pot) or kale (boerenkool) and served with smoked sausage and bacon. If you want to cook a Dutch dish the recipe below is a good option: simple, easy to prepare, cheap and healthy.

Stamppot met andijvie en spekjes

Mashed potatoes with endive and crispy baked bacon

Serves 4 you need:

- 400 g (3/4 lb) endive, one piece or ready sliced
- 250 g (1/2 lb) smoked bacon bits
- 1 kg (2 lbs) floury potatoes
- 25 g (1 oz; 2 tbsp) butter - milk to mix - salt and pepper

Preparation

- Wash and drain the endive, shred finely if needed.
- Fry the bacon bits until crisp and reserve the fat.
- Peel the potatoes and cook them in water with 1/2 a tbsp of salt in a large pan for 20 minutes.
- Drain the potatoes with the butter and add milk until you have a thick puree.
- Fold in the shredded endive, bacon bits together with the fat.
- Return to the heat to warm through and season to taste with salt and pepper.



5.3 Dutch traditions

Dauwtrappen

Dauwtrappen is getting up early on Ascension Day in spring and then taking a bicycle tour through the countryside in groups. Before bicycles were common, people would take walks barefoot. The name comes from 'dauw', the word for dawn, and 'trappen', meaning kicking or cycling.

Koningsdag

On April 27, we celebrate King's Day (Koningsdag); King Willem-Alexander's birthday. On this national holiday, the king and his family visit a city in the Netherlands and participate in classic Dutch games. For the common people there are flea markets and festivals, all dressed in orange clothing.

Sinterklaas

At the end of November, Sinterklaas can be spotted riding his white horse on Dutch rooftops, leaving children small presents in their shoes down the chimney. The saint from Spain comes by boat, and on December 5, Sinterklaas and his helpers, the Petes (Pieten) deliver gifts and sprinkle spiced cookies (the famous pepernoten) everywhere on the Eve of Presents. (If you are reminded of Santa Claus, no worries: Sinterklaas was a big inspiration for this other saint.)

Elfstedentocht

The Elfstedentocht (Eleven Cities Tour) is an almost 200-kilometre-long ice-skating contest on natural ice. Leeuwarden is traditionally the start and finish place. The tour leads from Leeuwarden to the cities of Sneek, IJlst, Sloten, Stavoren, Hindeloopen, Workum, Bolsward, Harlingen, Franeker, Dokkum and over the Bonkefeart back to the finish in Leeuwarden. The last Elfstedentocht was in 1997: because of global warming and warm winters, the ice has not been thick enough since. Still, every year, we hope for a strong winter so another Elfstedentocht can take place! Nowadays it is also possible to cycle or travel the Elfstedentocht by canoe.

Gezellig!

Now here is a word you will be hearing quite often in the Netherlands: 'gezellig'! It is probably the one word most (international) students will mention if they had to name a typically Dutch word. You will not find it in any other language, and for the Dutch it is a very important part of daily life. It is best described as 'congenial people getting together in a warm and pleasant atmosphere to have a good time' or the phrase 'cosy, but with people.'

Holland – The Netherlands

A bit of Dutch history: Holland and The Netherlands refer to the same country! After the founding of the Dutch Republic, the majority of trade, shipping and wealth came through Holland, an area on the coast of the Netherlands. As a result, Holland became a popular name for the entire country and is still used for all twelve provinces of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. (Of course, during football and other sporting events, everyone shouts Holland to encourage the national team!)



5.4 Basic Dutch etiquette

When moving to another country you may not know exactly how to address people in the proper way. In general, the Dutch are easy-going when it comes to formalities. They more or less see and treat everyone equally. Maybe you will be taken aback a little by the fact that especially in the academic world, the relationship between students and the academic staff is usually informal in the way that they address each other by saying 'jij' (the informal word for 'you') and by their first names.

Saying hello

When you meet someone new, Dutch people will introduce themselves and often shake hands. In informal contexts, such as birthdays, acquaintances and friends may exchange three kisses, instead of the two you use in many other cultures. Naturally, if you are uncomfortable, you can simply wave or do a fist-bump. Especially after the COVID-19 measures, fist-bumps have become popular when meeting new people. It is a personal choice and you should never feel pressure.

Being on time

Although we mentioned earlier that in general, the Dutch are quite easy-going, there is one thing you should keep in mind: being on time. In many cultures, being on time is more of a suggestion than a rule, but in the Netherlands punctuality is highly appreciated. It is customary to simply be on time, or even arrive a little early when meeting someone. The Dutch (and even the students) expect you to take traffic jams, trains not running on time or other delays into account. So, if you have an appointment with someone, make sure you leave on time.



www.vhluas.com
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